

M E M O I R S

OF THE

L I F E

OF

V O L T A I R E.

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V O L . T . A I R E
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L I F E

Translated from the French

V O L . T . A I R E

D U B L I N

Printed for Messrs. Moncrieff, Walker,
Esq. Wilson, Jackson, Burton,
White, Byrne, Marchant,
Cass, and Herry

MDCCLXXVII

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WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

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MDCCLXXXIV.

Extract of a Letter from Paris
dated May 2, 1784

Which may serve as a Preface to
this Edition of the Memoirs
of VOLTAIRE.

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is highly irritated, and is said to be very busily employed in writing an answer to these Memoirs. The friends of Voltaire allow them to be authentic, and nobody doubts it. The Ambassador of ****, his most intimate friend, has assured me he threw them in the fire; but his deceitful Secretary, had in all probability, reserved a copy. M. de Beaumarchais likewise is accused of imprudence. But accusations are fruitless. The Memoirs

moirs are really written by Voltaire, and must soon or late become public. This Voltaire is a sort of malignant spirit, who came upon earth only to embitter the cup of life, and afterwards laugh at our wry faces.

more are really written by Vol-
taire and the French Revolution
public. I first of all is a list of
intelligent spirit who came in a
cent only to remember the day of
the and afterwards laugh at our
way goes.



M.E.

M E M O I R S

OF

V O L T A I R E.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

I WAS tired of the lazy and turbulent life led at Paris, of the multitude of Petit-Maitres, of bad books printed with the approbation of Censors and the privilege of the King, of the cabals and parties among the learned, and of the mean arts, plagiarism, and book-making which dishonour literature. In the year 1733, I met with a

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young

young lady who happened to think nearly as I did, and who took a resolution to go with me and spend several years in the country, there to cultivate her understanding, far from the hurry and tumult of the world.

This Lady was no other than the Marchioness de Châtelet, who of all the women in France, had a mind the most capable of the different branches of science. Her father, the Baron de Breteuil, had taught her Latin, which she understood as perfectly as Madame Dacier. She knew by rote the most beautiful passages in Horace, Virgil, and Lucretius, and all the philosophical works
of

of Cicero were familiar to her. Her inclinations were more strongly bent towards the mathematics and metaphysics than any other studies, and seldom have there been united in the same person so much justness of discernment, and elegance of taste, with so ardent a desire of information.

Yet notwithstanding her love of literature, she was not the less fond of the world, and those amusements which were adapted to her sex and age: she however, determined to quit them all, and go and bury herself in an old ruinous chateau, upon the borders of Champagne and Lorraine, and situated in a barren
and

and unhealthy soil. This old chateau she ornamented, and embellished it with tolerably pretty gardens; I built a gallery, and formed a very good collection of natural history: add to which, we had a library not badly furnished.

We were visited by several of the learned, who came to philosophize in our retreat: among others we had the celebrated Koenig for two entire years, who has since died professor at the Hague, and Librarian to her Highness the Princess of Orange. Maupertuis came also, with John Bernouilli; and there it was that Maupertuis, who was born the most jealous of all human beings, made
me

me the object of a passion which has ever been to him exceedingly dear.

I taught English to Madame du Châtelet, who, in about three months, understood it as well as I did, and read Newton, Locke, and Pope, with equal ease. She learnt Italian likewise as soon. We read all the works of Tasso and Ariosto together, so that when Algarotti came to Cirey, where he finished his *Neutonianismo per le Dame*, [The Ladies Newton,] he found her sufficiently skilful in his own language to give him some very excellent information by which he profited. Algarotti was a Venetian, the son of a very rich trades-

man, and very amiable ; he travelled all over Europe, knew a little of every thing, and gave to every thing a grace.

In this our delightful retreat we sought only instruction, and troubled not ourselves concerning what passed in the rest of the world. We long employed all our attention and powers upon Leibnitz and Newton : Madame du Châtelet attached herself first to Leibnitz, and explained one part of his system, in a book exceedingly well written, entitled *Institutions de Physique*. She did not seek to decorate philosophy with ornaments to which philosophy is a stranger ; such affectation never was part of her character, which
was

was masculine and just. The properties of her style were clearness, precision, and elegance. If it be ever possible to give the semblance of truth to the ideas of Leibnitz, it will be found in that book : but at present few people trouble themselves to know how or what Leibnitz thought.

Born with a love of truth, she soon abandoned system, and applied herself to the discoveries of the great Newton ; she translated his whole book on the principles of the Mathematics into French ; and when she had afterwards enlarged her knowledge, she added to this book, which so few people understood, an Algebraical

Com-

Commentary, which likewise is not to be understood by common readers. M. Clairaut, one of our best Geometricians, has carefully reviewed this commentary, an edition of it was begun, and it is not to the honour of the age, that it was never finished.

At Cirey we cultivated all the arts; it was there I composed *Alzire*, *Merope*, *l'Enfant*, *Prodigue*, and *Mahomet*. For her use I wrote an Essay on Universal History, from the Age of Charlemagne, to the present. I chose the epocha of Charlemagne, because it was the point of time which Bossuet stopped at, and because

cause I durst not again treat a subject already handled by so great a master.

Madame duChâtelet, however, was far from satisfied with the Universal History of this prelate; she thought it eloquent only, and was provoked to find that the labours of Bossuet were all wasted upon a nation so despicable as the Jewish.

After having spent six years in this retreat, in the midst of the arts and sciences, we were obliged to go to Brussels, where the family of du Châtelet had long been embroiled in a law-suit with the family of Honfbrouk.

Here

Here I had the good fortune to meet with a grandson of the illustrious and unfortunate Grand Pensioner De Wit, who was first President of the Chamber of Accounts, and had one of the finest libraries in Europe, which was of great use to me in writing my Universal History.

But I had a still superior happiness at Brussels, and which gave me infinite pleasure. I terminated the law-suit by an accommodation, in which the two families had been ruining each other with expences for near sixty years, and gained two hundred and twenty thousand livres paid in ready money to the Marquis du Châtelet.

While

While I remained at Bruffels, and in the year 1740, the unpolished King of Prussia, Frederic-William, the most intolerant of all Kings, and beyond contradiction the most frugal, and the richest in ready money, died at Berlin. His son, who has since gained so singular a kind of reputation, had then held a tolerably regular correspondence with me for above four years. The World never perhaps beheld a father and son who less resembled each other than these two Monarchs.

The father was an absolute Vandal, who thought of no other thing during his whole reign, than amassing of money,
and

and maintaining, at the least possible expence, the finest soldiers in Europe. Never were subjects poorer, or King more rich. He bought up at a despicable price the estates of a great part of the Nobility, who soon devoured the little money they got for them, above half of which returned to the royal coffers by means of the duties upon consumption. All the King's lands were farmed out to tax-gatherers, who held the double office of Exciseman and Judge; insomuch, that if a landed tenant did not pay this collector upon the very day appointed, he put on his Judge's robe, and condemned the delinquent in double the sum. It must be observed, that

that if this same Excifeman and Judge did not pay the King by the last day of the month, the day following he was himself obliged to pay double to the King.

Did a man kill a hare or lop a tree any where near the Royal domains, or commit any other Peccadillo; he was instantly condemned to pay a fine. Was a poor girl found guilty of *making* a child? the father or the mother, or some other of the girl's relations, were obliged to pay his Majesty *for the fashion.*

The Baronness of Kniphaussen, who at that time was the richest widow in Berlin, that is to say, she had between three and four hundred a year, was accused of having brought one of the King's subjects clandestinely into the world in the second year of her widowhood. His Majesty thereupon wrote her a letter, with his own hand, wherein he informed her it was necessary, if she meant to save her honour, and preserve her character, she must immediately send him thirty thousand livres (1250l.) This sum she was obliged to borrow, and was ruined.

He

He had an Ambaffador at the Hague, whose name was Luifius; and certainly of all the Ambaffadors that appertained to royalty, he was paid the worft. This poor man, that he might be able to keep a fire, had cut down some trees in the garden of Hous-lardick, which then appertained to the Royal-houfe of Pruffia. His next difpatches brought him word that the King, *his gracious Sovereign* had ftopped on this account a year's falary to defray his damages, and Luifius, in a fit of defpair, cut his throat with the only razor he had. An old valet, happening to come in, called affiftance, and unhappily for him faved his life. I afterwards met with his Excellency at the

the Hague, and gave him alms at a gate of the Palace, which is called the Old Court, and which belonged to the King of Prussia, where this poor Ambassador had lived twelve years.

Turkey it must be confessed is a Republic, when compared to the despotism exercised by this Frederic-William.

It was by such like means, only, that he could in a reign of twenty-eight years load the cellars of his Palace at Berlin with a hundred and twenty millions of crowns (fifteen millions sterling), all well casked up in barrels hooped with iron.

He

He took great pleasure in furnishing all the best apartments of the Palace with heavy articles of massy silver, in which the worth of the workman surpassed not the sterling of nature. He gave to the Queen his wife, in charge that is, a cabinet, the contents of which even to the coffee-pot were all gold.

The Monarch used to walk from his Palace cloathed in an old blue coat, with copper buttons, halfway down his thighs, and when he bought a new one, these buttons were made to serve again. It was in this dress that his Majesty, armed with a huge serjeant's cane, marched forth every day to review his regiment

of giants. These giants were his greatest delight, and the things for which he went to the heaviest expence.

The men who stood in the first rank of this regiment were none of them less than seven feet high, and he sent to purchase them from the farther parts of Europe to the borders of Asia. I have seen some of them since his death.

The King, his son, who loved handsome men, and not gigantic, had given those I saw to the Queen, his wife, to serve in quality of Heiduques. I remember they accompanied the old state coach, which preceded the Marquis de Beauvau,

Beauvau, who came to compliment the new King in the month of November, 1740. The late King Frederic-William, who had sold during his life all the magnificent furniture left by his father, never could find a purchaser for that enormous ungilt coach. The Heidukes, who walked on each side to support it in case it should fall, shook hands with each other over the roof.

After Frederic-William had reviewed his giants, he used to walk through the town, and every body fled before him full speed. If he happened to meet a woman, he would demand why she staid idling her time in the streets, and ex-
claim,

claim, Go—get home with you, you lazy
hussy; an honest woman has no business
over the threshold of her own door; which
remonstrance he would accompany with
a hearty box on the ear, a kick in the
groin, or a few well applied strokes on
the shoulders with his cane.

The holy Ministers of the Gospel were
treated also in exactly the same style, if
they happened to take a fancy to come
upon the parade.

We may easily imagine, what would
be the astonishment and vexation of a
Vandal like this, to find he had a son
endowed with wit, grace, and good
breeding;

breeding; who delighted to please, was eager in the acquisition of knowledge, and who made verses, and afterwards set them to music. If he caught him ^{with} a book in his hand, he threw it in the fire; or playing on the flute, he broke his instrument; and sometimes treated his Royal Highness, as he treated the ladies and the preachers when he met with them on the parade.

The Prince, weary of the attentions of so kind a father, determined one fine morning, in 1730, to elope, without well knowing whether he would fly to France or England. Paternal œconomy had deprived him of the power of travelling in
the

the style of son and heir to a farmer-general, or even an English tradesman, and he was obliged to borrow a few hundred ducats.

Two young gentlemen, both very amiable, one named Kat, the other Keit, were to accompany him. Kat was the only son of a brave General Officer, and Keit had married the daughter of the same Barronness of Kniphaussen, who had paid the ten thousand crowns about the child-making business before mentioned. The day and hour were appointed; the father was informed of the whole affair, and the Prince and his two travelling com-

companions were all three put under an arrest.

The King believed at first, that the Princess Wilhelmina, his daughter, who was afterwards married to the Prince Margrave of Bareith, was concerned in the plot: and as he was remarkable for dispatch in the executive branch of justice, he proceeded to kick her out of a large window, which opened from the floor to the ceiling. The Queen-Mother, who was present at this exploit, with great difficulty saved her, by catching hold of her petticoats at the moment she was making her leap. The Princess received a contusion on her left breast, which

which remained with her during life, as a mark of paternal affection, and which she did me the honour to shew me.

The Prince had a sort of mistress, the daughter of a school-master, of the town of Brandebourg, who had settled at Potsdam. This girl played tolerably ill upon the harpsicord, and the Prince accompanied her with his flute. He really *imagined* himself in love, but in this he was deceived; his avocation was not with the *fair sex*. However, as he had pretended a kind of passion, the king, his father, thought proper that the damsel should make the tour of Potsdam, conducted by the hangman, and ordered her

her to be whipped in presence of his son.

After he had regaled him with this diverting spectacle, he made a transfer of him to the citadel of Custrin, which was situated in the midst of a marsh. Here he was shut up, without a single servant, for the space of six months, in a sort of dungeon, at the end of which time he was allowed a soldier as an attendant.

This soldier, who was young, well made, handsome, and played upon the flute, had more ways than one of amusing the royal prisoner. So many fine qualities have made his fortune; and I have

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since

since known him, at the same time Valet de Chambre and first Minister, with all the insolence which two such posts may be supposed to inspire.

The Prince had been some weeks in his Palace at Custrin, when one day an old officer, followed by four grenadiers, immediately entered his chamber, melted in tears. Frederic had no doubt he was going to be made a head shorter; but the officer still weeping, ordered the grenadiers to take him to the window, and hold his head out of it, that he might be obliged to look on the execution of his friend Kat, upon a scaffold expressly built there for that purpose. He saw, stretched out his
hand,

hand, and fainted. The father was present at this exhibition, as he had been at that of the girl's whipping-bout.

Keit, the other confidant, had escaped and fled into Holland; whither the King dispatched his military messengers to seize him. He escaped merely by a minute, embarked for Portugal, and there remained till the death of the most clement Frederic William.

It was not the King's intention to have stopped there; his design was to have beheaded the Prince. He considered that he had three other sons, not one of whom wrote verses, and that they were
sufficient

sufficient to sustain the Prussian grandeur. Measures had been already concerted to make him suffer, as the Czarovitz, eldest son to Peter the Great, had done before.

It is not exceedingly clear, from any known laws, human or divine, that a young man should have his head struck off, because he had a wish to travel. But his Majesty had found judges in Prussia, equally as learned and equitable as the Russian expounders of law. Besides that his own paternal authority, in a case of need, would at any time suffice.

The Emperor Charles the Sixth, however pretended that the Prince Royal,

as

as a prince of the Empire, could not suffer condemnation but in a full diet; and sent the Count de Sekendorf to the father, in order to make very serious remonstrances on that subject.

The Count de Sekendorf, whom I have since known in Saxony, where he lives retired, has declared to me, it was with very great difficulty indeed, that he could prevail with the King not to behead the Prince. This is the same Sekendorf who has commanded the armies of Bavaria, and of whom the Prince, when he came to the throne, drew a hideous portrait, in the history of his father, which he inserted in some thirty copies of his Me-

moires de Brandebourg*. Who would not, after this, serve Princes, and prevent tyrants from cutting off their heads?

After eighteen months imprisonment, the solicitations of the Emperor, and the tears of the Queen, obtained the Prince his liberty; and he immediately began to make verses, and write music more than ever. He read Leibnitz, and even Wolf, whom he called a compiler of trash, and devoted himself to the whole circle of sciences at once.

* I gave the Elector Palatine the copy of this work, which the King of Prussia presented to me.

As

As the King his father, suffered him to have very little to do with the national affairs, or as there rather indeed were no such affairs in a government, the whole business of which was reviews, he employed his leisure in writing to those men of letters in France, who were something known in the world. These letters were some in verse, and others were treatises of metaphysics, history, and politics. He treated me as a something *divine*, and I him as a *Solomon*. Epithets cost us nothing. They have printed some of these ridiculous things in a collection of my works, and happily they have not printed the thirtieth part of them. I took the liberty to send him
an

an exceedingly beautiful ink-stand ; he had the bounty to present me with a few gew-gaws of amber, and all the wits of the Parisian coffee-houses imagined with horror my fortune was made.

A young Courlander, named Keizerling, who was likewise a rhymers, and of course a favourite with Frederic, was dispatched from the frontiers of Pomernia to us at Cirey. We prepared a feast for him, and I made a fine illumination, the lights of which composed the cypher, and the name of the Prince Royal, with this device, *l'Espérance du genre humain* : —The hope of all nations.

For

For my own part, had I been inclined to indulge personal hopes, I had great reason so to do; for my Prince always called me his *dear friend*, in his letters, and spoke frequently of the *solid* marks of friendship which he designed for me as soon as he should mount the throne.

The throne at last was mounted, while I was at Brussels, and he began his reign by sending an Ambassador Extraordinary to France; one Camas, who had lost an arm, formerly a French refugee, and then an officer in the Prussian army. He said that, as there was a Minister from the French court at Berlin, who had but one hand, he, that he might acquit

quit himself of all obligation towards the Most Christian King, had sent him an Ambaffador with only one arm.

Camas, as soon as he arrived safe at his inn, dispatched a lad to me, whom he had created his page, to tell me that he was too much fatigued to come to my house, and therefore begged I would come to him instantly, he having the finest, greatest, and most magnificent present that ever was presented, to make me on the part of the King his master. Run—run as fast as you can, said Madame du Châtelet, he has assuredly sent you the diamonds of the crown.

Away

Away I ran, and found my Ambassador, whose only baggage was a small keg of wine, tied behind his chaise, sent from the cellar of the late king by the reigning Monarch, with a royal command for me to drink. I emptied myself in protestations of astonishment and gratitude for these *liquid* marks of his Majesty's bounty, instead of the *solid* ones I had been taught to expect, and divided my keg with Camas.

My *Solomon* was then at Strasbourg; the whim had taken him while he was visiting his long and narrow land, which extends from Guelders to the Baltic ocean, that he would come *incognito* to
view

view the frontiers and troops of France. This pleasure he enjoyed at Strasbourg, where he went by the name of count du Four, a Lord of Bohemia. His brother, the Prince Royal, who was with him, had also his travelling title; and Algaroti, who already had attached himself to him, was the only one who went unmasked.

His majesty sent me a history of his journey to Brussels, half verse, half prose, written in a taste something similar to that of Bachaumont and la Chapelle; that is to say, as similar as a King of Prussia's could be supposed to be. The following are extracts from his letter.

“ After

“ After these abominable roads, we
“ were obliged to put up at still more
“ abominable inns.

“ Hungry and cold, and late at night,

“ Each thievish host beheld our plight ;

“ And each, with more than frugal fist,

“ (Stew'd first in most infernal mist)

“ Would poison us, and after rob us,

“ Happy to think how they could fob us.

“ Oh times ! when robbing is so common !

“ Oh age ! how wide from age of Roman !

“ Roads frightful, food bad, drink
“ worse. This was not all ; we met
“ with many accidents ; and to be sure
“ our equipage must have something
“ very odd about it, for every place we

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“ passed

“ passed through they took us for out-
“ landish animals.

“ One stares, and Monarchs us believes,
“ Others suspect we're civil thieves ;
“ Some think us late let loose from college,
“ And eager all of farther knowledge,
“ They croud and squint, and wish to smoke us,
“ As cockneys gape at hocus-pocus.

“ The master of the post-house at Kell
“ having assured us there was no safety
“ without passports, and seeing we were
“ drove to an absolute necessity of mak-
“ ing them for ourselves, or of not en-
“ tering Strasbourg, we were e'en forced
“ to this shift, in the execution of which,
“ the Prussian arms, which I had upon
“ my seal, were marvellously useful.
“ We

“ We arrived at Strasbourg, and the
“ *Corfaire de la douane* and the *Visiteur*
“ seemed satisfied with our proofs.

“ The rascals found themselves in clover,

“ With one eye read our passports over,

“ And fix'd the other on our purse,

“ Determin'd we should reimburse

“ Their pains, with guineas good and many ;

“ Thus gold, with which Jove bought Miss Danaë,

“ Thus gold, with which your mighty Cæsar

“ Govern'd the world with wondrous ease, Sir ;

“ Gold, greater far than all the noddies,

“ Ycleped or either God or Goddess,

“ Soon brought the scoundrels to adore us,

“ And ope the gates of Strasbourg for us *.”

We

* Perhaps it is impossible to render the true spirit of these extracts, and others inserted in these Memoirs, with-

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We may see by this letter, that he was not yet become the best of all possible poets, and that his philosophy did not look with total indifference on the metal of which his father had made such ample provision.

From Strasbourg he went to visit his territories in the Lower Germany, and sent me word he would come *incognito* to see me at Brussels. We prepared elegant apartments for him in the little Chateau de Meuse, two leagues from Cleves. He informed me, he expected
I should

out appearing either stupid or extravagant; though liberties have been taken in the style, which would scarcely be justifiable in other parts of the work. T.

I should make the first advances, and accordingly I went to pay him my most profound respects.

Maupertuis, who had already formed his plan, having the mania of becoming President of an Academy upon him, had presented himself, and was lodged with Algaroti and Keizerling in one of the garrets in the palace. One foldier was the only guard I found. The Privy-Counsellor and Minister of State, Rambonet, was walking in the court-yard, blowing his fingers. He had on a pair of large, dirty, coarse ruffles, a hat all in holes, and an old judge's wig, one side of which hung into his pocket, and the other

scarcely touched his shoulder. They informed me, that this man was charged with a state affair of great importance, and so indeed he was.

I was conducted into his Majesty's apartment, in which I found nothing but four bare walls. By the light of a bougie, I perceived a small truckle bed, of two feet and a half wide, in a closet, upon which lay a little man, wrapped up in a morning gown of blue cloth. It was his Majesty, who lay sweating and shaking, beneath a beggarly coverlet, in a violent ague fit. I made my bow, and began my acquaintance by feeling his pulse, as if I had been his first physician.

The

The fit left him, and he rose, dressed himself, and sat down to table with Algaroti, Keizerling, Maupertuis, the Ambassador to the States-General, and myself. While we were at supper, we treated most profoundly on the immortality of the soul, natural liberty, and the *Androgines* of Plato.

While we were thus philosophizing upon freedom, the Privy-Counsellor Rambonet, was mounted upon a post horse, and riding all night towards Liege, at the gates of which he arrived the next day, where he proclaimed, with sound of trumpet, the name of the King his master, while two thousand soldiers from Vefel

fel was laying the city of Liege under contribution. The pretext for this pretty expedition was certain rights, which his Majesty pretended to have over the suburbs. It was to me he committed the task of drawing up the manifesto, which I performed as well as the nature of the case would let me; never suspecting that a King, with whom I supped, and who called me his friend, could possibly be in the wrong. The affair was soon brought to a conclusion, by the payment of a million of livres, which he exacted in good hard ducats, and which served to defray the expences of his tour to Strasbourg, concerning which he complained so loudly in his poetic prose epistle.

I soon

I soon felt my self attached to him, for he had wit, an agreeable manner, and was moreover, a King; which is a circumstance of seduction hardly to be vanquished by human weakness. Generally speaking, it is the employment of men of letters to flatter Kings; but in this instance, I was praised by a King, from the crown of my head to the sole of my foot, at the same time that I was libelled, at least once a week, by the Abbe Des Fontaines, and other Grub-street poets of Paris.

Some time before the death of his father, the King of Prussia thought proper to write against the principles of Machiavel.

Machiavel. Had Machiavel had a Prince for a pupil, the very first thing he would have advised him to do, would have been so to write. The Prince Royal, however, was not master of so much finesse; he really meant what he writ; but it was before he was a King, and while his father gave him no great reason to fall in love with despotic power. He praised moderation with his whole soul; and in the ardour of his enthusiasm, looked upon all usurpation as absolute injustice.

This manuscript he had sent to me at Brussels, to have it corrected and printed; and I had already made a present of it to a Dutch bookseller, one Venduren, one
of

of the greatest knaves of his profession. I could not help feeling some remorse, at being concerned in printing this Anti-Machiavelian book, at the very moment the King of Prussia, who had a hundred millions in his coffers, was robbing the poor people at Liege of another, by the hands of the Privy-Counsellor Rambonet.

I imagined my Solomon would not stop there. His father had left him sixty-six thousand four hundred men, all complete, and excellent troops. He was busily augmenting them, and appeared to have a vast inclination to give them employment the very first opportunity.

I re-

I represented to him, that perhaps it was not altogether prudent to print his book just at the time the world might reproach him with having violated the principles he taught; and he permitted me to stop the impresson. I accordingly took a journey into Holland, purposely to do him this trifling service; but the bookseller demanded so much money, that his Majesty, who was not, in the bottom of his heart, vexed to see himself in print, was better pleased to be so for nothing, than to pay for not being so.

While I was in Holland, occupied in this business, Charles the Sixth died, in the month of October, 1740, of an indigestion,

digestion, occasioned by eating champignons, which brought on an apoplexy, and this plate of champignons changed the destiny of Europe. It was presently evident, that Frederic the third, King of Prussia, was not so great an enemy to Machiavel as the Prince Royal appeared to have been.

Although he had then conceived the project of his invasion of Silesia, he did not the less neglect to invite me to his court; but I had before given him to understand I could not come to stay with him; that I deemed it a duty to prefer friendship to ambition; that I was attached to Madame du Châtelet; and

F

that,

that, between philosophers, I loved a lady better than a King. He approved of the liberty I took, though for his own part he did not love the ladies. I went to pay him a visit in October; and the Cardinal de Fleury writ me a long letter, full of praises of the Anti-Machiavel, and of the author, which I did not forget to let him see.

He had already assembled his troops, yet not one of his Generals or Ministers could penetrate into his designs. The Marquis de Beauvau, who was sent to complement him on his accession, believed he meant to declare against France, in favour of Maria-Theresa, Queen of Hungary

Hungary and Bohemia, and daughter of Charles the Sixth; and to support the election of Francis of Lorraine, Grand Duke of Tuscany, and husband of that Queen, to the empire, supposing he might thence derive great advantages.

I had more reason than any person to suppose, the new-crowned King of Prussia meant to espouse this party; for three months before, he had sent me a political dissertation after his manner, wherein he considered France as the natural enemy and depredator of Germany. But it was constitutional with him to do the direct contrary of what he said or writ; not from dissimulation, but because he spoke
and

and writ with one kind of enthusiasm, and afterwards acted with another.

He departed on the 15th of December, with the quartan ague, for the conquest of Silesia, at the head of thirty thousand combatants, well disciplined, and well accoutred. As he mounted his horse, he said to the Marquis de Beauvau, Maria Theresa's Minister, "I am going to play your game; should the trumps fall into your hands, we will divide the winnings."

He has since that written the history of that conquest, and he shewed me the whole of it. Here follows one of the
curious

curious paragraphs, in the introduction to these annals, which I, in preference, carefully transcribed, as a thing unique in its kind.

“ Add to the foregoing considerations, I had troops entirely prepared to act; this, the fulness of my treasury, and the vivacity of my character, were the reasons why I made war upon Maria-Theresa, Queen of Bohemia and Hungary.”

And a few lines after, he has these very words,

“ Ambition, interest, and a desire to make the world speak of me, van-

“ quished all, and war was determined
“ on.”

From the time that the conquerors, or fiery spirits that would be conquerors, first were, to the present hour, I believe he is the only one who has ever done himself thus much justice. Never man, perhaps, felt reason more forcibly, or listened more attentively to his passions; but this mixture of a philosophic mind, and a disorderly imagination, have ever composed his character.

It is much to be regretted that I prevailed on him to omit these passages, when I afterwards corrected his works;

a con-

a confession so uncommon, should have passed down to posterity, and have served to shew upon what motives the generality of wars are founded. We authors, poets, historians, and academicians declaimers, celebrate these fine exploits; but here is a monarch who performs and condemns them.

His troops had already over-run Silesia, when his Minister at Vienna, the Baron de Gotter, made the very impolite proposal to Maria-Theresa, of ceding, with a good grace, to the Elector and King his master, three-fourths of that province: for which his Prussian Majesty would

would lend her three millions of crowns, and make her husband Emperor.

Maria-Theresa, who at that time had neither troops, money, nor credit, was notwithstanding inflexible; she rather chose to risk the loss of all, than crouch to a Prince whom she looked upon as the vassal of her ancestors, and whose life the Emperor, her father, had saved. Her Generals could scarcely muster twenty thousand men. Marshal Neuperg, who commanded them, forced the King of Prussia to give battle under the walls of Neisse. The Prussian cavalry was at first put to the rout by the Austrian; and

and the King, who was not accustomed to stand fire, fled at the first shock as far as Opeleim, twelve long leagues from the field of battle.

Maupertuis, who hoped to make his fortune in a hurry, was in the suit of the Monarch this campaign, imagining that the King would at least find him a horse. But this was not the royal custom. Maupertuis bought an afs for two ducats, on the day of battle, and fled with all his might after his Majesty on afs-back. This steed, however, was presently distanced, and Maupertuis was taken and stripped by the Austrian hussars.

Frederic

Frederic passed the night on a truckle-bed, in a village alehouse near Ratibor, on the confines of Poland, whence he was preparing to enter the northern part of his own dominions, when one of his horsemen arrived from the camp at Molwitz, and informed him he had gained the victory. This news was confirmed a quarter of an hour after by an Aid-de-Camp, and was true enough.

If the Prussian cavalry was bad, the infantry was the best in Europe; it had been under the discipline of the old Prince of Anhalt for thirty years. Marshal Schwerin, who commanded, was a pupil of Charles the Twelfth. He turned
the

the fate of the day as soon as the King was fled. The next day his Majesty came back to his army, and the conquering General was very near being disgraced.

I returned to philosophize in my retreat at Cirey, and passed the winter at Paris, where I had a multitude of enemies; for, having long before written the History of Charles XII. presented several successful pieces to the theatre, and composed an epic poem, I had, of course, all those who either writ in verse or prose as persecutors; and as I had the audacity to write likewise on philosophic subjects, I of necessity was treated as an
atheist

atheist by all those who are called devotees, according to the ancient usage.

I was the first who had dared develop to my countrymen, in an intelligible style, the discoveries of the great Newton. The Cartesian prejudices, which had taken place of the prejudices of the Peripatetics, were at that time so rooted in the minds of the French, that the Chancellor d'Aguesseau regarded any man whatever who should adopt discoveries made in England, as an enemy to reason and the state. He never would grant a privilege that I might have my *Elements of the Newtonian Philosophy* printed.

I was

I was likewise a vast admirer of Locke; I considered him as the sole reasonable Metaphysician. Above all, I praised that moderation so new, so prudent, and at the same time so daring, where he says, we have not sufficient knowledge to determine or affirm, by the light of reason, that God could not grant the gifts of thought and sensation to a being which we call Material.

The obstinate malignity and intrepidity of ignorance, with which they set upon me on this article, cannot be conceived. The principles of Locke had never occasioned any disputes in France before, because the Doctors read St.

G

Thomas

Thomas Aquinas, and the rest of the world read Romances. As soon as I had praised this Author, they began to cry out against both him and me. The poor creatures, who were hottest in this dispute, certainly knew very little of either matter or spirit. The fact is, we none of us know what or how we are, except that we are convinced we have motion, life, sensation, and thought, but without having the least conception of how we came by them. The very elements of matter are as much hidden from us as the rest. We are blind creatures, that walk on, groping and reasoning in the dark; and Locke was exceedingly right when he asserted, it was not
for

for us to determine what the Almighty could or could not do.

All this, added to the success of my theatrical productions, drew a whole library of pamphlets down upon me, in which they proved I was a bad Poet, an Atheist, and the son of a Peasant.

A history of my life was printed, in which this genealogy was inserted—An industrious German took care to collect all the tales of that kind, which had been crammed into the libels they had published against me. They imputed adventures to me with persons I never knew, and with others that never existed.

I have

I have found while writing this, a letter from the Marshal de Richelieu, which informed me of an impudent Lampoon, in which it was proved his wife had given me an elegant coach, with *something else*, at a time when he had no wife.

At first I took some pleasure in making a collection of these calumnies; but they multiplied to such a degree I was obliged to leave off. Such were the fruits I gathered from my labours: I, however, easily consoled myself; sometimes in my retreat at Cirey, and at others in mixing with the best company.

While the refuse of literature were thus making war upon me, France was
doing

doing the same upon the Queen of Hungary; and it must be owned, this war was equally unjust; for after having solemnly stipulated, guaranteed, and swore to the Pragmatic Sanction of the Emperor Charles VI. and the succession of Maria-Theresa to the inheritance of her father, and after having received Lorraine as the purchase of these promises, it does not appear very consistent with the rights of nations to break an engagement so sacred. The Cardinal de Fleury was persuaded out of his pacific measures; he could not say, like the King of Prussia, it was the vivacity of his temper which occasioned him to take arms. This fortunate Prelate reigned when he

was eighty-six years of age, but held the reins of government with a very feeble hand.

France was in alliance with the King of Prussia, when he seized upon Silesia; and had sent two armies into Germany at a timewhen Maria-Theresa had none. One of these armies had penetrated to within five leagues of Vienna, without meeting a single opponent; Bohemia was given to the Elector of Bavaria, who was elected Emperor also, after having been created Lieutenant-General of the armies of the King of France. They soon, however, committed all the faults necessary

necessary to lose the advantages they had gained.

The King of Prussia, in the mean time, having matured his courage, and gained several victories, concluded a Peace with the Austrians. Maria, to her infinite regret, gave him up the county of Glatz with Silesia. Having, without ceremony, broke off his alliance with France on these conditions, in the month of June, 1742, he writ me word he had put himself under a proper regimen, and should advise the other invalids to do the like.

This Prince was then at the height of his power, having one hundred and
thirty

thirty thousand men under his command used to victory, and the cavalry of which he himself had formed. He drew twice as much from Silesia as it produced to the House of Austria, saw himself firmly seated in his new conquest, and was happy, while all the other contending powers were suffering the miseries of depredation. Princes in these times ruin themselves by war—he enriched himself.

He now turned his attention to the embellishment of the city of Berlin, where he built one of the finest opera-houses in Europe, and whither he invited artists of all denominations. He wished

wished to acquire glory of every kind, and to acquire it in the cheapest manner possible.

His father had resided at Potzdam in a vile old house; he turned it into a palace. Potzdam became a pleasant town; Berlin grew daily more extensive; and the Prussians began to taste the comforts of life, which the late King had entirely neglected. Several people had furniture in their houses, and some even wore shirts, for in the former reign such things were little known; they wore sleeves and fore-bodies only, tied on with pack-thread, and the reigning Monarch had been so educated.

The

The scene changed as it were by magic; Lacedæmon became Athens; deserts were peopled; and one hundred and three villages were formed from marshes cleared and drained. Nor did he neglect to make verses, and write music: I therefore was not so exceedingly wrong in calling him, The Solomon of the North. I gave him this nick name in my Letters, and he continued long to bear it.

M E M M O I R S

OF

V O L T A I R E.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

PART THE SECOND.

CARDINAL de Fleury died the twenty-ninth of February, 1743, at the age of ninety. Never did man come to be Prime-Minister later in life, and never did Prime-Minister keep his place so long. He began his career of good fortune at the age of seventy-three,
by

by being King of France; and so he continued indisputably to the day of his death, always affecting the greatest modesty, never amassing riches, and without pomp, forming himself only to reign. He left the reputation of an artful and amiable person, rather than that of a man of genius, and was said to have known the intrigues of a court, better than the affairs of Europe.

I have often seen him at the house of Madame de Villeroi, when he was only the ancient Bishop of the little paltry town of Frejus, of which he was always called Bishop *by divine indignation*, as may be seen in some of his letters.

Madame

Madame de Villeroi was an exceedingly ugly woman, whom he *repudiated* as soon as ever it was convenient. The marshal de Villeroi, her husband, who knew not the Bishop had long been the lover of his lady, prevailed on Louis XIV. to name him Preceptor to Louis XV. From Preceptor he became Prime-Minister, and was not backward in contributing to the exile of his benefactor. Ingratitude excepted, he was a tolerably good man; but, as he had no talents himself, he took care to drive away all those who had, be they of what kind they would.

Several of the Academicians were desirous I should supply his place in the

French Academy. It was asked at the King's supper, who should pronounce the Cardinal's funeral oration at the Academy? His Majesty replied, it should be me; the Dutches of Chateauroux, his Mistress, would have it so; but the Count de Maurepas, Secretary of State, would not. He was bit with a foolish rage of quarrelling with all the Mistresses of his Master, and found the effects of his disease.

An old idiot, who was Preceptor to the Dauphin, formerly a Theatine Monk, and afterwards Bishop of Mirapoix, named Boyer, undertook, for conscience-sake, to second the caprice of M.
de

de Maurepas. This Boyer having the disposal of the church livings, the King left all the affairs of the Clergy to his management. This, in his opinion, came under the head of ecclesiastical matters; and he remonstrated that it would be an offence against God, should a profane person, like me, succeed a Cardinal.

I knew that M. de Maurepas incited him to act thus; I therefore went to this Minister, and told him, that though the honour of being an Academician was not a very important dignity, yet, after having been appointed, it was a disagreeable thing to be excluded. You are upon ill terms with the Dutches de Chateau-

Chateauroux, with whom his Majesty is in love, and likewise with the Duke de Richelieu, by whom she is governed. But pray, my Lord, what connexion is there between these disputes of yours, and a poor seat in the French Academy? I conjure you to tell me sincerely, in case Madame de Chateauroux can vanquish the Bishop de Mirepoix in this contest, will you remain neuter?—He seemed to collect himself for a moment, and then replied, “No; I shall crush you.”

The Priest at length conquered the Mistress, and I lost my seat in the Academy, which did not give me much vexation;

ation; but I love to recollect this adventure; it depicts so truly the little arts of those whom we call *the Great*, and shews how really trifles are often considered by them as very important matters.

Public affairs, however, went on no better since the death of the Cardinal, than they had done during the two last years of his life. The House of Austria rose from its ashes into new life; France was pressed hard by England; and we had no resource left but in the King of Prussia, who had led us into this war, and who abandoned us in our necessity. They conceived the design of

sending secretly to sound the intentions of this Monarch, and try if he was not in a humour to prevent the storm, which, soon or late, must gather at Vienna, and fall upon him, after having visited us; to see therefore if he would not lend us a hundred thousand men on this occasion, and thus fix himself more firmly in the Silesian conquest.

The Duke de Richelieu, and the Dutcheſs de Chateauroux first imagined this scheme, the King adopted it, and M. Amelot, Minister for foreign Affairs, but in a very subaltern situation, was singly charged to hasten my departure. A pretext was wanted, and I seized

feized that of my dispute with the old Bishop of Mirepoix, which met with his Majesty's approbation. I writ to the King of Prussia, that I could no longer endure the persecutions of this Theatine Monk; and that I must take refuge with a King, who was a philosopher, to escape the snare of a Bishop, who was a bigot. This Prelate always signed himself *l'anc*, instead of *l'ancien*, [the ancient] Bishop of Mirepoix; and his writing being very bad, we used continually to read and call him the afs of Mirepoix. It was a subject of pleasantry, and never was negociation more gay.

The

The King of Prussia who struck not with a palsied hand, when the blow was intended for the cheek of a Monk, or a Prelate become courtier, replied with a deluge of sarcasms upon the ass of Mirepoix, and pressed me to come.

I took great care, that both my letters and these answers should be read. It soon came to the Bishop's ears, and he went to complain to his Majesty, that he was laughed at for a fool in a foreign court.

The King's answer was, it was a matter agreed on, and he must let it pass without notice.

This

This answer has very little of the character of Louis XV. in it ; and, as coming from him, always appeared to me extraordinary. Thus I had at once the pleasure of revenging myself upon a Bishop, who had excluded me from the academy, of taking a very agreeable journey, and of having an opportunity to exert myself in the service of the King and State. Even the Count de Maurepas entered into this project with warmth, because at that time he governed M. Amelot, and considered himself in fact as the Minister for foreign affairs.

The most singular part of this business was, that we were obliged to let madame
du

du Châtelet into the secret. There was not in her opinion any thing in the world so unmanly, so abominable, as for a man to leave a woman to go and live with a King ; and she would have made a most dreadful tumult, had they not agreed, that, to appease her, she should be informed of the reason, and that the letters should all pass through her hands.

Whatever money I wanted for my journey, was given upon my mere receipt by M. de Marmontel, which power I took care not to abuse. I stayed some time in Holland, while the King of Prussia was galloping from one end of his territories to the other, to be present at reviews,

reviews, and my stay at the Hague was not useless. I had apartments in the palace *de la Vieille Cour*, which belonged at that time to the King of Prussia, in participation with the House of Orange. His Envoy, the young Count de Padvitz, loved, and was beloved by the lady of one of the principal persons among their High Mightinesses, and he obtained from her copies of all their secret resolutions, which at that time were very prejudicial to the interests of France. These copies I sent to our court, and my service was found very acceptable.

When I came to Berlin, his Majesty would lodge me in the palace as he had
done

done on my former visits. He led at Potzdam the life he had always led since his advancement to the throne: the manner of it deserves a description.

He rose at five in summer, and six in winter. If you wish to know the royal ceremonies, what they were on great, and what on common occasions, the functions of his high Almoner, his great Chamberlain, the first Gentleman of his Bed-chamber, and his Gentlemen Ushers, I answer, a single lacquey came to light his fire, dress and shave him, though he partly dressed himself alone. His chamber was rather beautiful; a rich balustrade of silver, ornamented with little
loves,

loves, of exceedingly good sculpture, seemed to form the alcove of the state-bed, the curtains of which were seen; but behind these curtains, instead of a bed there was a library; and as to the real bed, it was a kind of folding couch of straw, with a slight mattress, and hidden from the view. Marcus Aurelius and Julian, the two greatest men among the Romans, and apostles of the Stoics, lay not on a harder bed.

As soon as his Majesty was dressed and booted, Stoicism for a few moments gave place to Epicurism. Two or three of his favourites entered: these were either Lieutenants, Ensigns, Pages, Heidukes,

or young Cadets. Coffee was brought in, and he to whom the handkerchief was thrown, remained ten minutes tête-à-tête with his Majesty. Things were not carried to the last extremity, because while Prince, in his father's life-time, he had been very ill treated, and ill cured, in his amours *de passade**. He could not play principal, and was obliged to content himself with the second.

These school-boy sports being over, the state affairs next were considered, and his first Minister came with a large bundle of papers under his arm. This first Minister was a Clerk, who lodged up

* Of once and away.

two-pair of stairs in the house of Fudessdoff, and was the soldier, now valet de chambre and favourite, who had formerly served the King at Custrin. The Secretaries of state sent all the dispatches to the King's Clerks; they made extracts, which were brought to his Majesty by this person, and the King writ his answer in the margin in two words. The whole affairs of the kingdom were thus expedited in an hour, and seldom did the Secretaries of state, or the Ministers in office, come into his presence; nay, there were some to whom even he had never spoken. The King, his father, had put the finances under such exact regulations, all was executed in such a military manner,

manner, and obedience was so blind, that four hundred leagues were governed with as much ease as a manor.

About eleven o'clock, the king, booted, reviewed in his garden his regiment of guards; and at the same hour all the Colonels did the like throughout the provinces, in the interval of parade and dinner-time. The Princes his brothers, the General officers, and one or two of his Chamberlains, eat at his table, which was as well furnished as could be expected in a country where they had neither game, tolerable butcher's meat, nor poultry, and where they got all their wheat from Magdebourg.

When

When dinner was over he retired to his cabinet, and writ verses till five or six o'clock, when a young man of the name of Darget, formerly secretary to M. de Valory, the French Envoy, came and read to him. At seven he had a little concert, at which he played the flute, and as well as the best performers. His own compositions were often among the pieces played, for there was no art he did not cultivate; and had he lived among the Greeks, he would not, like Epaminondas, have had the mortification to confess he did not understand music.

They supped in a little hall, the most singular ornament of which was a picture,

the design of which he himself gave to Pene, his painter, and one of our best colourists. The subject was totally Priapian. Turtles billing, young men in the embraces of young women, nymphs beneath satyrs, cupids at lascivious sports, people fainting with desire at beholding them, and rams and goats at similar pastimes. The supper was frequently seasoned with the same kind of philosophy; and any person who had heard the discourse, and looked at this picture, would have supposed they had caught the Seven Sages of Greece in a brothel.

Never was there a place in the world where liberty of speech was so fully indulged,

dulged, or where the various superstitions of men were treated with so great a degree of pleasantry and contempt. God was respected, but those who in his name had imposed upon credulity, were not spared. Neither women nor priests ever entered the palace ; and, in a word, Frederic lived without religion, without a council, and without a court.

Some of the provincial judges were about to burn a poor devil of a Peasant, accused of an intrigue of a shocking nature. No person, however, is executed in the Prussian dominions, till Frederic has confirmed the sentence ; a most humane law, practised likewise in England,

and

and other countries. The King wrote at the bottom of the sentence, that free liberty of opinion, and of ***** was allowed throughout his territories.

A Minister near Stettin, thought this indulgence exceedingly scandalous, and let fall some expressions in a sermon upon Herod, which glanced at the King; he was therefore summoned to appear before the Consistory at Potzdam, though in fact there was no more a Consistory at Court than there was a Mass. The poor man came. The King put on a band and surplice. M. d'Argens, Author of the Jewish Letters, and one Baron de Polnitz, who had changed his religion three

or

or four times, dressed themselves up in the same manner. A folio volume of Bayle's Dictionary was placed upon the table by way of a Bible, and the culprit was introduced by two grenadiers, and set before these three Ministers of the Gospel.

My brother, said the King, I demand, in the name of the most High God, who the Herod was concerning whom you preached? He who slew the Children, replied the simple Priest. But was this Herod the first? said the King; for you ought to know there have been several Herods. The Priest was silent; he could not answer this question. How! continued

tinued the King, have you dared to preach about Herod, and are ignorant both of him and his family? You are unworthy of the holy ministry. We shall pardon you for this time, but know we shall excommunicate you if ever you dare hereafter preach against any one whom you do not know.

They then delivered his sentence and pardon to him, signed by three ridiculous names invented on purpose. We shall go to-morrow to Berlin, added the King, and we will demand forgiveness for you of our brotherhood. Do not fail to come and find us out. Accordingly the Priest went, and enquired for these three labourers

labourers in the gospel vineyard all over Berlin, where he was laughed at; but the King, who had more humour than liberality, forgot to reimburse him for the expences of his journey.

Frederic governed the church with as much despotism as the state. He pronounced the divorces himself when husband and wife wanted to pair themselves differently. A minister one day cited the Old Testament on the subject of divorces, and the King told him, Moses managed the Jews just as he pleased; as for me, I must govern my Prussians to the best of my abilities.

This 3

This singularity of government, these manners still more singular, this contrast of Stoicism and Epicurianism, of severity in military discipline, and effeminacy in the interior of the Palace, of Pages with whom he amused himself in his closet, and of Soldiers who run the gauntlet six and thirty times, while the monarch beheld them through his window, under which the punishment was inflicted, of reasoning on ethics, and of unbridled licentiousness, formed altogether a heterogeneous picture, which till then few had known, and which has since spread through Europe.

The

The greatest œconomy of every kind was observed at Potsdam; the King's table, and that of his officers and domestics, were regulated at thirty-three crowns (about four guineas) a day, exclusive of wine. Instead of the Officers of the crown taking charge of this expence, as at other courts, it was his valet de chambre Fridesdorff, who was at once his High Steward, Great Cup-bearer and First Pantler.

Whether it was from policy or œconomy, I know not; but he never granted the least kindness to any of his former favourites, especially to those who had risked their lives for him when he was

K

Prince

Prince Royal. He did not even pay the money he borrowed at that time. Like as Louis XII. would not revenge the affronts of the Duke d'Orleans, neither would the King of Prussia remember the debts of the Prince Royal.

His poor mistress, who had suffered whipping for his sake by the hands of the common hangman, was married at Berlin to the Clerk of the Hackney-Coach-Office, for they had eighteen hackney coaches at Berlin; and her royal lover allowed her a pension of seventy crowns (eight pounds fifteen shillings) a year. She called herself Mademoiselle Saumers, and was a tall,
meagre

meagre figure, very like one of the Sybils, without the least appearance of meriting to be publicly whipped for a Prince.

When, however, he was at Berlin, he made a great display of magnificence on public days. It was a superb spectacle for the vain, that is to say, for almost all mankind, to see him at table, surrounded with twenty Princes of the Empire, served in vessels of gold, the richest in Europe, by two and thirty Pages, and as many young Heidduques, all splendidly cloathed, and bearing dishes of massy gold. The State Officers
were

were also employed on these occasions, though unknown at any other time.

After dinner they went to the Opera at the large Theatre, three hundred feet long; which had been built without an Architect by one of his Chamberlains, whose name was Knoberstoff. The finest voices and best dancers were engaged in his service. Barberini at that time danced at his Theatre, the same who has since been married to the son of his Chancellor. The King had her carried off by his soldiers from Venice, and brought even through Vienna as far as Berlin. He was a little in love with her, because
 she

she had legs like a man; but the thing most of all incomprehensible, was, that he gave her a salary of thirty-two thousand livres (above thirteen hundred pounds.) His Italian Poet, who was obliged to put the operas into verse, of which the King himself gave the plan had little more than a thirtieth part of this sum; but it ought to be remembered, he was very ugly, and could not dance. In a word, Barberini touched for her share more than any three of his Ministers of State together.

As for the Italian Poet, he one day took care to pay himself with his own hands, for he stript off the gold from the

ornaments in an old chapel of the first King of Prussia's; on which occasion Frederic remarked, that as he never went to the chapel he had lost nothing. Besides, he had lately written a dissertation in favour of thieves, which is printed in the collections of his academy; and he did not think proper this time to contradict his writings by his actions.

This indulgence was not extended to any military being. There was an old gentleman of Franche-Comté, confined in the prison of Spandau, who was six feet high, and whom the late King for that reason had inveigled into Prussia. They promised him the place of Chamberlain,

berlain, and gave him that of foot soldier. This poor man soon after deserted with one of his comrades, but was taken and brought before the late King. He had the simplicity to tell him, he repented of nothing but that he had not stabbed such a tyrant; and for this answer he had his nose and ears cut off, ran the gauntlet six and thirty times, and was afterwards sent to wheel the barrow at Spandau. He continued this employment to the very time that M. de Valory, our Envoy, pressed me to beg remission for him of the most *clement* son of the most iron-hearted Frederic-William.

His

His Majesty had been pleased to say, it was to oblige me that he had got up an Opera full of poetical beauties, and written by the celebrated Metastasio, called, *La Clemenza di Tito*. The King, with the assistance of his composer, had set it to music himself. I took this opportunity to recommend the poor old Frenchman without nose and ears, to his bounty, which I did in the following admonitory verses.

What ! can it be when mighty Frederic reigns
That wretches groan ? Oh ! Genius universal,
Soul firm, yet feeling, deign to end the culprit's
Torments ; cease not your generous cares for misery :

Lo!

Lo! at your feet, where Pity, daughter of
Repentance, mistress of great minds, kneels trembling,
Astonished to find her tears shed in vain,
On the hand that has driven Sorrow from the Earth.
Wherefore display with such magnificence
The triumphs of great Titus? Imitate
Him every way, or vaunt of him no more.

The request was something daring,
but one may say what one will poeti-
cally. His Majesty promised remission,
and some months after even had the
bounty to send the poor gentleman in
question to the Hospital, at three pence
a day, which favour he had refused to
the Queen his mother; but she, in all
probability,

probability, had asked only in prose.

In the midst of all these feasts, operas, and suppers, my secret negotiation went forward ; the King was willing I should speak on every thing, and I frequently took occasion to intermix questions concerning France and Austria with the Eneid and Roman History. The conversation was sometimes animated ; the King became warm, and would tell me, that while our Court was knocking at every door to procure peace, he should not think it adviseable to go to war in our defence. I sent my reflexions upon paper, left half blank, from my apartment

ment to his : and he answered my daring remarks in the margin. I have this paper still, in which I have said,

Can it be doubted that the House of Austria will seize the very first opportunity, to redemand Silesia ? To which he answered in the margin,

Ils feront reçûs, biribi,

A la façon de Barbari,

Mon ami.

Then they received, my friend, shall be

After the mode of Barbary.

This new kind of negotiation finished by a discourse, which in one of his moments

moments of vivacity, he made me against the King of England, his dear Uncle. These two Kings did not love one another. My Prussian Monarch told me, "George was the Uncle of Frederic, but not of the King of Prussia;" and he ended by saying, "Let France declare war against England, and I will march."

This was all I wanted. I returned instantly to France, and gave an account of my journey; with such hopes to the French Ministry as had been given me at Berlin. Neither were they false, for the spring following the King of Prussia concluded a new treaty with France, and advanced into Bohemia with a hundred thousand

thousand men while the Austrians were in Alfatia.

Had I related my adventure to any good Parisian, with the service I had done the state, he would not have made the least doubt of my having been promised a good place. I will tell you what was my recompence. The Dutcheſs de Chateauroux was vexed the negotiation had not been brought about entirely by her means ; ſhe had likewise an inclination to have M. Amelot turned out becauſe he ſtuttered, which trifling defect ſhe found offensive, and ſhe farther hated him becauſe he was governed by M. de Maurepas ; he was accordingly

L

dis-

dismissed eight days after, and I was included in his disgrace.

It happened some time after this, that Louis XV. fell extremely ill at the city of Metz. This was the time for M. de Maurepas and his cabal to ruin the Dutcheſs de Chateauroux. The Biſhop of Soiſſons, Fitz-James, ſon of the baſtard of James II. who was thought a ſaint, would, in quality of Grand Almoner, convert the King; and declared he would neither grant him abſolution, nor ſuffer him to communicate, if he did not drive away his Miſtreſs, with her ſiſter the Dutcheſs of Lauragais, and their friends; and the two ſiſters in conſequence departed,

parted with the execrations of the people of Metz.

This action of Louis XV. was the occasion that the Parisians, equally stupid with the good folks of Metz, gave him the surname of BIEN-AIME, *Well-beloved*. A fellow named Vadé first invented this title, which all the Almanacs echoed. As soon as the Prince recovered, he desired only to be the well-beloved of his Mistress, for whom he found his affection increase; and she was again going to undertake her Ministry, when she died suddenly, in consequence of the passions into which she had been
thrown

thrown by her dismissal. She was presently forgot.

A Mistress was now wanted, and the choice fell upon the Demoiselle Poisson. She was the daughter of a kept woman and a countryman, who lived at La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, and who had amassed some money by selling wheat to the corn-factors. This poor man at that time had absconded, having been condemned for malversation, and they had married his daughter to the under Farmer general le Normand, Lord of Etiole, and Nephew of the Farmer-general le Normand, of Tourneham, who kept her mother. The daughter had been well educated, was prudent, amiable,

miable, very graceful, had great talents, a fine understanding, and a good heart.

I was tolerably intimate with her, and was even the confidant of her amours. She confessed to me, she had always had a secret fore-thought that the King would fall in love with her, and that she had always ardently wished he might, without making her wishes too apparent. This idea, which seems so chimerical for a person in her station, originated from her having been often taken to the royal hunt in the forest of Senar. Tournegui her mother's lover, had a country-house near there, and used to take her out to air in a neat Calash. His Ma-

jeſty had obſerved her, and had often ſent her veniſon. Her mother never ceaſed telling her ſhe was handſomer than Madame de Chateauroux, and the good man Tourneham confirmed it in raptures. It muſt be owned, the daughter of Madame Poiſſon, was a morſel for Maſteſty. After ſhe was certain of her Royal Lover, ſhe told me ſhe was firmly perſuaded of the doctrine of predeſtination, and ſhe had ſome cauſe ſo to be. I paſſed ſeveral months with her at Etiole, while the King made the campaign of 1746.

I hence obtained rewards which had never been granted to my works or my ſervices.

services. I was deemed worthy to be one of the forty *useless* Members of the Academy, was appointed Historiographer of France, and created by the King one of the Gentlemen in ordinary of his Chamber. From this I concluded it was better, in order to make the most trifling fortune, to speak four words to a King's mistress, than to write a hundred volumes.

As soon as I had the appearance of a fortunate man, the whole brotherhood of the Beaux-Esprits of Paris was let loose upon me, with all the inveterate animosity which might be expected from them.

them against a person who gained every recompense he was entitled to by his merit.

My connexion with Madame du Châtelet was never interrupted; our friendship and our love of literature, were unalterable; we lived together both in town and out of town. Cirey is situated upon the borders of Lorraine, and King Stanislaus at that time kept his little agreeable court at Luneville. Old and fanatic as he was, he yet had a friendship with a lady who was neither. His soul was divided between Madame la Marquise de Boufflers, and a Jesuit, whose name was Menou; a Priest, the most daring

daring and full of intrigue I have ever known.

This man had drawn from King Stanislaus, by means of his Queen, whom he had governed, about a million of livres, near forty-two thousand pounds, part of which were employed in building a magnificent house for himself and some Jesuits of Nancy. This house was endowed with twenty-four thousand livres, or a thousand pounds a year, half of which supplied his table, and the other half was to give away to whom he pleased. The King's mistress* was not
by

* Omit the word Mistress, it is false, and insert Friend. The Marchioness de Boufflers was a most disinterested

by any means so well treated; she scarcely could get enough from his Polish Majesty to buy her petticoats, and yet the Jesuit envied what she had, and was violently jealous of her power. They were at open war*, and the poor King had

disinterested friend, and seldom used her interest but in the service of her friends; and the expression, *enough to buy her petticoats*, is not at all applicable.

* Madame de Boufflers never was at variance with Father Menou, who, all-intriguing as he was, never thought of giving Stanislaus Madame du Châtelet for a mistress. That lady, and M. de Voltaire, never were at Luneville, except when invited by M^e de B***, whom they often visited, and found very amiable;

had enough to do every day when he came from mass, to reconcile his mistress and his confessor. Our Jesuit at last having heard of Madame du Châtelet, who was exceedingly well shaped, and still tolerably handsome, conceived the project of substituting her to Madame de Boufflers.

Stanislaus amused himself sometimes in writing little works, which were bad

able; they never went as to the King of Poland. If Menou really proposed the journey to Voltaire and Madame du Châtelet, it was when he was informed they were coming, and to make a merit of it with the King.

The two last notes are by M. de St. Lambert, author of a Poem on the Seasons.

enough,

enough, and Menou imagined an authorefs would fucceed with him as a miftrefs better than any other. With this fine trick in his head he came to Cirey, cajoled Madame du Châtelet, and told us how delighted King Stanislaus would be in our company. He then returned to the King, and informed him how ardently we defired to come and pay our court to his Majesty. Stanislaus asked Madame de Bouffleurs to bring us; and we went to pafs the whole year, 1749, at Luneville. But the projects of the holy Jefuit did not fucceed; the very reverfe took place; we were devoted to Madame de Boufflers, and he
had

had two woman to combat instead of one.

The life led at the court of Lorraine was tolerably agreeable; though there, as in other courts, there were plenty of intrigues and artifice.

Towards the end of the year, Poncet, Bishop of Troyes, who was overwhelmed with debts, and whose reputation was lost, wished to come and augment our intrigues and artifice.

When I say he had lost his reputation, I mean also the reputation of his sermons and funeral orations. He ob-

M

tained,

tained, through the interest of our two ladies, the place of Grand-Almoner to the King, who was flattered by having a Bishop in his pay, and at very small wages too. This Prelate did not come till 1750: he began his career by intriguing against Madame de Boufflers, his benefactress, and was dismissed. His anger alighted on Louis XV. the son-in-law of Stanislaus; being returned to Troyes, he would needs play a part in the ridiculous farce of the confessional billets, invented by Beaumont, Archbishop of Paris: he made head against the parliament, and braved the King. This was not the way to pay his debts, but to get himself imprisoned.

Louis

Louis sent him into Alfatia, and had him shut up in a convent of fat German Friars.

But I must return to what concerns myself. Madame du Châtelet died in the palace of Stanislaus, after two days illness; and we were so affected, that not one of us ever remembered to send for Priest, Jesuit, or one of the Seven Sacraments. It was we, and not Madame du Châtelet, who felt the horrors of death. The good King Stanislaus came to my chamber, and mixed his tears with mine: few of his brethren would have done so much on a like occasion. He wished me to stay at Luneville,

ville, but I could no longer support the place, and returned to Paris.

It was my destiny to run from King to King, although I loved liberty even to idolatry. The King of Prussia, whom I had frequently given to understand I would never quit Madame du Châtelet for him, would absolutely entrap me, now he was rid of his rival. He enjoyed at that time a peace, which he had purchased with victory; and his leisure hours were always devoted to making verses, or writing the history of his country and campaigns. He was well convinced, that in reality his verse and prose too, were superior to my verse
and

and prose, as to their essence; though as to the form, he thought there was a certain something, a turn, that I in quality of Academician, might give to his writings; and there was no kind of flattery, no seduction, he did not employ to engage me to come.

Who might resist a Monarch, a Hero, a Poet, a Musician, a Philosopher, who pretended too to love me, and whom I thought I also loved. I sat out once more for Potzdam, in the month of June, 1750. Astolphus did not meet a kinder reception in the palace of Alcina. To be lodged in the same apartments that Marshal Saxe had occupied; to have the

royal cooks at my command, when I chose to dine alone; and the royal coachman, when I had an inclination to ride, were trifling favours.

Our suppers were very agreeable. I know not if I am deceived, but I think we had a deal of wit. The King was witty, and gave occasion to wit in others; and what is still more extraordinary, I never found myself so much at my ease. I worked two hours a day with his Majesty, corrected his works, and never failed highly to praise whatever was worthy of praise, although I rejected the dross. I gave him details of all that was necessary in rhetoric and criticism,

for

for his use; he profited by my advice, and his genius assisted him more effectually than my lessons.

I had no court to make, no visits to pay, no duty to fulfil; I led the life of liberty, and had no conception of any thing more happy than my then situation. My Frederic-Alcina, who saw my brain was already a little discorded, redoubled the potions that I might be totally inebriated. The last seduction was a letter he writ, and sent from his apartments to mine. A Mistress could not have written more tenderly; he laboured in his epistle to dissipate the fear which his rank and character had inspired:

ed: It contained these remarkable words:

“ How is it possible I should bring
“ unhappiness on the man I esteem, who
“ has sacrificed his country, and all that
“ humanity holds dear to me. I respect
“ you as my Master, and love you as
“ my friend. What slavery, what mis-
“ fortune, what change can be feared,
“ in a place where you are esteemed as
“ much as in your own country, and
“ with a friend who has a grateful heart.
“ I respected the friendship that endear-
“ ed you to Madame du Châtelet, but
“ after her I am one of your oldest
“ friends. I give you my promise you
“ shall

“ shall be happy here as long as I
“ live.”

Here is a letter, such as few of *their Majesties* write : it was the finishing glass to compleat my drunkenness. His wordy protestations were still stronger than his written ones. He was accustomed to very singular demonstrations of tenderness to younger favourites than I, and forgetting for a moment I was not of their age, and had not a fine hand, he seized it and imprinted a kiss ; I took his, returned his salute, and signed myself his slave.

It

It was necessary I should get permission from the King of France to belong to two Masters: The King of Prussia took charge of every thing, and writ to ask me of Louis. I never imagined they were shocked at Versailles, that a Gentleman in Ordinary of the Chamber, one of the most useless Beings of a Court, should become a useless Chamberlain at Berlin. They granted me full permission, but were highly piqued, and did not pardon me. I greatly displeased the King of France without pleasing the King of Prussia, who laughed at me in the bottom of his heart.

Behold

Behold me then with a silver key gilt with gold hanging at my button-hole, a cross round my neck, and twenty thousand livres, or eight hundred guineas a year. Maupertuis fell sick, and yet I did not perceive the occasion.

At that time there was a Physician at Berlin, one La Metrie, who was the most frank and declared Atheist of all the physical people of Europe. He was a gay, pleasant, thoughtless fellow, who knew the theory of physic as well as the best of his brethren, but without contradiction the worst practitioner upon earth, for which reason he had left the profession. He ridiculed the whole faculty
of

of Paris, and had even written many personalities against individuals, which they could not pardon; and they obtained a decree against him, by which a reward was offered for his apprehension.

La Meitre, had in consequence, fled to Berlin, where he amused himself sufficiently by his gaiety, and likewise by writing and printing all that can be imagined most impudent upon manners; his books pleased the King, who made him not his Physician, but his Reader.

One day after the lecture, La Meitre, who spoke whatever came uppermost, told his Majesty there were persons exceed-

exceedingly jealous of my favour and fortune.—*Be quiet awhile*, said Frederic, *we squeeze the orange, and throw it away when we have swallowed the juice.*—La Metrie did not forget to repeat to me this fine apophthegm, worthy Dionysius of Syracuse. From that time I determined to take all possible care of the orange-peel. I had about twelve thousand guineas to place out at interest, but was determined it should not be in the territories of my Alcina. I found an advantageous opportunity of lending them upon the estates which the Duke of Wurtemberg possessed in France.

The King, who opened all my letters, did not doubt of my intention to quit his court. The furor of rhiming, however, still possessing him, as it did Dionysius, I was obliged continually to pore, and again revise his History of Brandenburg, and all the rest of his works.

La Metrie died from having eaten a pastry stuffed with truffles, after a very hearty dinner at the table of Lord Tyrconnel, Envoy from France. It was

pretended he had been confessed before his death. The King was exceedingly vexed at this, and took care to be exactly informed concerning the truth of the

the assertion; they assured him it was an atrocious, calumny, for La Mettrie had died as he lived, abjuring God and Physicians. His Majesty was convinced, and immediately composed his funeral oration, which was read, in his name, at a public sitting of the Academy, by Darget his Secretary. He settled five-and-twenty pounds a year likewise upon a girl of the town, whom La Mettrie had brought from Paris, where he had left his wife and children.

Maupertuis, who knew the anecdote of the orange-peel, took an opportunity to spread a report, that I had said, the place of King's Atheist was vacant.

This

This calumny did not succeed; but he afterwards added I had also said, the King's poetry was bad; and this answered his purpose.

From this time forward, I found the King's suppers were no longer so merry; I had fewer verses to correct, and my disgrace was complete.

Algaroti, Darget, and a Frenchman, whose name was Chasol, one of the King's best Officers, left him all at once. I was preparing to do the same, but I wished, before I went, to enjoy the pleasure of laughing at a book Maupertuis had just printed. It was the best of opportunities,

portunities, for never had any thing appeared so ridiculous or absurd. The good man seriously proposed to travel directly to the two Poles; to dissect the heads of giants, and discover the nature of the soul by the texture of the brain; to build a city, and make the inhabitants all speak Latin; to sink a pit to the center of the earth; to cure the sick, by plastering them over with gum-resin; and, finally, to prophesy, by enthusiastically inflating the fancy.

The King laughed, I laughed, every body laughed at his book; but there was a scene acting at that time of a far more serious nature, concerning I know not

what mathematical nonsense that Maupertuis wanted to establish as discoveries. A more learned Mathematician, Koënic, Librarian to the Princess of Orange at the Hague, shewed him his mistake, and that Leibnitz, who had before him examined that old idea, had demonstrated its falsity in several of his letters, copies of which he sent Maupertuis.

Maupertuis, president of the Academy at Berlin, enraged that an associate and a stranger should prove his blunders, took care first to persuade the King, that Koënic being settled in Holland, was of course his enemy; and next, that he had said many disrespectful things of his Majesty's

jesty's verse and prose to the Princess of Orange.

This precaution taken, he suborned some few poor pensioners of the Academy, his dependents, had Koëning condemned as a forger, and his name erased from the number of Academicians. Here however he was anticipated, for Koëning sent back his patent-Academician-Dignity to Berlin.

All the men of letters in Europe were as full of indignation at the manœuvres of Maupertuis as they were weary of his book, and he obtained the contempt and hatred even of those who did not understand

stand the dispute. They were obliged to content themselves at Berlin with a mere shrug of the shoulders; for the King having taken a part in this unfortunate affair, no person durst speak. I was the only one who spoke out. Kœnig was my friend; and I had at once the satisfaction to defend the liberty of the learned, the cause of a friend, and of mortifying an enemy, who was as much the enemy of modesty as of me.

I had no intention to stay at Berlin; I had always preferred liberty to every thing; few men of letters have a proper sense of it; most of them are poor; poverty enervates, and even philosophers,

phers, at court, become as truly slaves as the first Officer of the Crown. I felt how displeasing my free spirit must be to a King more absolute than the Grand Turk. He was a pleasant Monarch, in the recesses of his palace, we must confess: he protected Maupertuis, and laughed at him more than any one. He writ against him, and sent his manuscript to my chamber by one Marvitz, a Minister of his secret pleasures; turned to ridicule the Pit to the center of the earth, the method of cure with Plaster of gum-resin, the voyage to the South Pole, the Latin city, and the cowardice of the Academy, in having suffered the tyranny exercised upon poor Koënic. But his motto

motto was, *No clamour when I don't cry*; and he had every thing burnt that had been written upon the controversy, except his own work.

I sent him back his order, his Chamberlain's key, and his pension; he then did every thing in his power to make me stay, and I every thing in my power to depart. He again gave me his cross and his key, and would have me to sup with him; I therefore once more supped like Democles, after which I parted with a promise to return, but with a firm design never to see him more.

Thus

Thus there were four of us who had escaped in a short time, Chasol, Darget, Algaroti, and I; in fact, there was no such thing as staying. It is well known how much must be borne from Kings, but Frederic was too free in the abuse of his prerogative. All society has its laws, except the society of the Lion and the Lamb. Frederic continually failed in the first of these laws; which is, to say nothing disobliging of any of the company. He often used to ask his Chamberlain Polnitz, if he would not willingly change his religion a fifth time, and offer to pay a hundred crowns down for his conversion. “ Good God, my dear Pol-

“ nitz,

"nitz, he would say, I have forgot the
 " name of that person at the Hague,
 " whom you cheated by selling him base
 " for pure silver; let me beg of you to
 " assist my memory a little." He treated
 poor d'Argens in much the same way;
 and yet these two victims remained. Pol-
 nitz having wasted his fortune, was obli-
 ged to swallow serpents for bread, and
 had no other food; and d'Argens had no
 property in the world, but his Jewish
 Letters, and his wife, called Cochois, a
 bad provincial actress, and so ugly she
 could get no employment at any trade
 though she practised several. As for
 Maupertuis, who had been silly enough
 to

to place out his money at Berlin, and not thinking a hundred pistoles better in a free country, than a thousand in a despotic one, he had no choice but to wear the fetters which himself had forged.

M E M O I R S

OF

V O L T A I R E.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

PART THE THIRD.

LEAVING my palace of Alcina,
I went to pass a month with the
Dutchess of Saxe-Gotha, the best of
Princesses; full of gentleness, discretion,
and equanimity, and who, God be thank-
ed, did not make verses. After that I
spent a few days at the country-house of

the

S the Landgrave of Hesse, who was still a remove farther from poetry than the Princess of Gotha. Thus I took breath, and thence continued, by short journies, my route to Franckfort, where a very odd kind of destiny was in reserve for me.

I fell ill at Franckfort, and one of my nieces, the widow of a Captain who had belonged to the regiment of Champagne, a most amiable woman, with excellent talents, and who, moreover was esteemed at Paris, as belonging to the Order of Good Company, had the courage to quit that city, and come to me on the Maine, where she found me a prisoner of war.

This

This fine adventure happened thus: One Freïtag, who had been banished Dresden, after having been put in chains and condemned to the wheel-barrow, became afterwards, an agent to the King of Prussia, who was glad to be served by such-like Ministers, because they asked no wages but what they could steal from travellers.

This Ambaffador, and one Schmitt, a tradesman, formerly condemned and punished for coining, signified to me, on the part of his Majesty, the King of Prussia, that I must not depart from Franckfort till I had given back the precious effects I had carried off from his Majesty.

Majesty. “ My very good Messieurs,
 “ (said I,) I have brought nothing out
 “ of that country, I can assure you, not
 “ even the least regret; what, then, are
 “ these famous jewels of the crown of
 “ Brandenburg, that you thus re-de-
 “ mand?”—“ *Dat it be, Montseer, an-*
 “ *swered Freitag) ouf dey wurks ouf po-*
 “ *esy ouf de King mine master.*”—“ Oh!
 “ (answered I,) with all my heart; he
 “ shall have his works in verse and prose,
 “ though I have more titles to them than
 “ one, for he made me a present of a
 “ fine copy, printed at his own ex-
 “ pence; but, unfortunately for me,
 “ this printed copy is at Leipfic, with
 “ my other effects.”

Freitag then proposed that I should stay at Franckfort till this treasure arrived from Leipfic, and signed the following curious quittance:

Montseer, so soon as shawl dey great pack come ouf Leipfic, mit de vurks ouf poesy be given mit me, you shawl go ouf were you do please. Given at Franckfort de vurst of June, 1753.—Freitag, Resident ouf de King mine master.

At the bottom of which I signed,—
*Good, vor dey vurks ouf poesy de King your master :—*With which the Resident was well satisfied.

On

On the twelfth of June the great *pack* of poesy came, and I faithfully remitted the sacred deposit, imagining I might then depart, without offence to any crowned head; but at the very instant when we were setting off, I, my Secretary, my servants, and even my niece, were arrested. Four Soldiers dragged us through the midst of the dirt, before M. Schmitt, who had I know not what right of Privy-Counsellor to the King of Prussia. This Franckfort trader thought himself at that moment a Prussian General; he commanded twelve of the town guards, with all the importance and grandeur an affair of such consequence required. My niece had a passport from
the

the King of France, and moreover, never had corrected the King of Prussia's verses. Women are usually respected amidst the horrors of war, but the Counsellor Schmitt, and the Resident Freitag, endeavoured to pay their court to Frederic, by hauling one of the fair sex through the mud. They shut us up in a kind of inn, at the door of which the twelve soldiers were posted. Four others were placed in my chamber, four in the garret, where they had conducted my niece, and four in a still more wretched garret, where my Secretary was laid upon straw. My niece, 'tis true, was allowed a small bed, but four soldiers, with fixed bayonets,

nets, served her instead of curtains and chamber-maids.

In vain we urged we had been invited to the court the Emperor had elected at Franckfort; that my Secretary was a Florentine, and a subject of his Imperial Majesty; that I and my niece were subjects of the Most Christian King; and that there was no difference between us and the Margrave of Brandenburg. They informed us that the Margrave had more power at Franckfort than the Emperor.

Twelve days were we held prisoners of war, for which we paid a hundred and
forty

forty crowns, or seventeen pounds ten shillings a day. Madame Schmitt had seized on all my effects, which were given back one half lighter: One need not wish to pay dearer for the *poesy* of the King of Prussia. I lost about as much as it had cost him to send for me and take lessons, and we were quits at parting.

To compleat the adventure, one Venduren, a Bookseller at the Hague, knave by profession, and bankrupt by habit, was then retired to Franckfort. This was the man to whom I had made a present thirteen years before of Frederic's manuscript of the Anti-Machiavel. One
finds

finds friends where one least expects them. He pretended that his Majesty owed him some twenty ducats, for which I was responsible : he reckoned the interest, and the interest of the interest. The Sieur Friliard, a Burgo-master of Franckfort, in the then year of his reign, said he, as a Burgo-master, found the account exceedingly right ; he likewise found the means to make me disburse thirty ducats, six and twenty of which he took to himself, and gave the remaining four to the honest Bookseller.

These Ostrogothian and Vandalian affairs being all thus satisfactorily ended,

I em-

I embraced my hosts, thanked them for their kind reception, and departed.

Some time after I went to drink the waters of Plombieres, and with them drank heartily of the waters of Leathe, from a thorough persuasion, that misfortunes of all kinds are good for nothing but to be forgot. My niece, Madame Denis, who was the consolation of my life, attached to me by her taste for letters, and the tenderest friendship, accompanied me from Plombieres to Lyons. Here I was received by the acclamations of the whole city, and tolerably well too by the Cardinal de Tencin, Archbishop of

of Lyons, so well known, by the manner in which he had made his fortune: that is, in making the famous Law, or Lais, Author of the system that ruined France, a Catholic. His Council of Embrun finished the fortune his conversion of Law had begun. This system made him rich enough to purchase a Cardinal's hat. He was a Minister of State, and told me in confidence, he durst not give me a public dinner because the King of France was vexed that I had quitted him for the King of Prussia. To this I answered, I never dined, and as to Kings or Cardinals, I was the man who perhaps of any in the world was soonest determined how to act.

P

I had

I had been advised to drink the waters of Aix, in Savoy, and though this place was under the dominion of a King, I proceeded to take the journey. I necessarily passed through Geneva, where the famous Physician Tronchin was just established, and who declared the waters of Aix would kill, but that he would cure me, and I followed his advice. No Catholic is permitted to settle at Geneva, nor yet in the Swiss Protestant Cantons; and it was to me a subject of pleasantry, to acquire domains in the only country upon earth where it was forbid I should have any.

I bought, by a very singular kind of contract, of which there was no example

in

in that country, a small estate of about sixty acres, which they sold me for about twice as much as it would have cost me at Paris ; but pleasure is never too dear. The house was pretty and commodious, and the prospect charming ; it astonishes without tiring : on one side is the Lake of Geneva, and the city on the other. The Rhone runs from the former in vast gushes, forming a canal at the bottom of my garden, whence is seen the Arve descending from the Savoy Mountains, and precipitating itself into the Rhone, and farther still another river. A hundred country-seats, a hundred delightful gardens, ornament the borders of the lakes and

and rivers. The Alps at a vast distance rise and terminate the horizon, and among their prodigious precipices, twenty leagues extent of mountain are beheld covered with eternal snows.

I had another good house with a more extensive view, at Laufanne; but a seat near Geneva is much more agreeable. In these two habitations I enjoyed what Kings do not give, or rather what they take away, Liberty and Ease. I likewise had what they sometimes do give, and what I had not of them. Here then I put my own precepts in practice.

How happy did I live in this iron age! Every convenience of life and
good

good cheer were found in my two houses. An affable and intelligent society, filled up the moments which study and the care of my health left vacant; and here I had more than one opportunity of driving sorrow from the bosoms of my dear fellow labourers in literature. I was not however born rich, and it may be asked by what art I could acquire wealth enough to live like a Farmer-general; to which I answer, and I would have others make me their example, I had seen so many men of letters poor and despised, that I had long determined not to augment the number.

In France every man must be either the hammer or the anvil, and I was

born the latter. A small patrimony daily becomes less, because the price of every thing encreases in time, and because government often has both rent and crop.

It is necessary to be attentive to every alteration, which Ministry, ever in want and ever inconstant, makes in the finances. There always are occasional opportunities, by which an individual may profit without obligation to any one, and nothing is so agreeable as to be oneself the founder of one's fortune. The first efforts are a little painful, the following are pleasant; and he who is an œconomist in his youth, will be surpris'd in old age

at

at his own wealth, which is the time when fortune is most necessary. It was then I enjoyed fortune: that after having lived with Kings, I became a King myself.

And now, while living in this peaceable opulence, and the most rigid independence, the King of Prussia thought proper to be appeased: in 1755 he sent me an Opera he had made from my Tragedy of Merope, which was, without dispute, the worst thing he ever writ. From that time he continued to write to me: I always had held a correspondence with his sister the Margravess of Bareith, whose

whose good-will towards me was unalterable.

Thus while I, in my retreat, enjoyed the most pleasant life imaginable, I had the philosophic satisfaction of seeing, that the Kings of Europe tasted not of my tranquillity; and of thence inferring, that the situation of an individual is often preferable to that of the greatest Kings, as will presently be seen.

In 1756, England made a piratical war upon France for some acres of snow; at the same time that the Empress Queen of Hungary appeared very desirous to recover her dear Silesia, of which she

had

had been pillaged by his Majesty of Prussia. For this purpose she negotiated with the Empress of Russia and the King of Poland, that is, in quality of Elector of Saxony, for nobody negotiates with the Poles. On the other hand, the King of France wished to revenge himself upon Hanover for the mischief which the Elector of Hanover, the King of England, did him at sea. Frederic, who at that time was in alliance with France, and who held our government in the most profound contempt, preferred an alliance with England; he therefore united himself with the House of Hanover, imagining he could keep the Russians out of Prussia with one hand, and

the

the French out of Germany with the other. He was mistaken in both these imaginings; but there was a third in which he was not mistaken; this was, to invade Saxony under pretext of friendship, and make war upon the Empress Queen of Hungary with the money he should rob the Saxons of. The Marquis of Brandenburg, by this remarkable manœuvre, singly changed the whole system of Europe. The King of France, desirous of retaining him in his alliance, sent the Duke de Nivernois, a man of wit, and who made very pretty verses, into Prussia. The embassy of a Duke, a peer, and a Poet, seemed likely to flatter the vanity and taste of Frederic; but he
laughed

laughed at the King of France, and signed his treaty with England. The very day the Ambaffador arrived, he played off the Duke and the peer very happily, and made an epigram upon the Poet.

It happened at that time to be the privilege of poetry to govern kingdoms. There was another Poet at Paris alfo, a man of rank, very poor, but very amiable; in a word, the Abbé de Bernis, fince Cardinal. He began by writing verfes againft me; he afterwards was my friend, though that was of little fervice to him; but he likewise became the friend of Madame de Pompadour, and ſhe ſerved him effectually. He had
been

been sent from Parnassus on an embassy to Venice; and he was then returned to Paris and in great credit.

The King of Prussia had glided a verse in his poor book of poesy, which that Freitag had re-demanded so earnestly at Franckfort, against the Abbé de Bernis.

“Avoid the steril abundance of Bernis.”

I do not believe either the book or the verse ever reached the Abbé; but as God is just, God made him an instrument to avenge France of Frederic. The Abbé concluded an offensive and defensive treaty with M. de Staremberg, the

the Austrian Ambassador, in despite of Rouillé, then Minister for Foreign Affairs. Madame de Pompadour presided at that negociation; and Rouillé was obliged to sign the treaty, in conjunction with the Abbé de Bernis, which was a precedent without example. Rouillé, it must be owned, was the most useless Secretary of State the King ever had; and moreover, the most ignorant the Long Robe ever knew. He asked one day if Wateravia was in Italy? While there was nothing difficult to transact he was suffered; but as soon as great objects came on the tapis, his insufficiency was felt, and the Abbé de Bernis supplied his place.

Mademoiselle Poisson, the wife of Le Normand, and Marchioness de Pompadour, was in reality first Minister of State. Certain outrageous terms let slip against her by Frederic, who neither spared women nor poets, had wounded the Marchioness to the heart, and contributed not a little to that revolution in affairs, which, in a moment, re-united the French and Austrians after more than two hundred years of a hatred supposed to be immortal. The court of France, that pretended to crush Austria in 1741, supported her in 1756; and in conclusion, France, Sweden, Russia, Hungary, the half of Germany, and the Fiscal of the Empire, all declared against the single Marquis

Marquis of Brandenburg. This Prince whose grandfather could scarcely maintain twenty thousand men, had an army of an hundred thousand foot, and forty thousand horse, well provided, well selected, and better disciplined; but there were four hundred thousand men in arms to oppose these. It happened in that war, that each party seized upon what was next at hand. Frederic took Saxony; France took the territories of Frederic, from the town of Guelders to Minden upon the Weser, and for a while possessed all the Electorate of Hanover and Hesse, the allies of Frederic; while the Empress of Russia, took the whole of Prussia. The King of Prussia beaten at
first

first by the Russians, beat the Austrians, and was afterwards beaten by them in Bohemia the eighteenth of June, 1757.

The loss of one battle ought apparently to have crushed this Monarch; pressed on all sides by the Russians, French and Austrians, he himself gave all for lost. Marshal de Richelieu had just concluded a treaty near Stade, with the Hanoverians and Hessians, which greatly resembled that of the *Caudian Forks*. Their army was no longer allowed to serve, and the Marshal was ready to enter Saxony with sixty thousand men: the Prince de Soubise prepared to penetrate it on another side with thirty thousand,

land, and was to be seconded by the arms of the circles of the empire, whence they were to march to Berlin. The Austrians had gained a second victory, and were already in possession of Breslau; and one of their Generals had even pushed to Berlin, and laid it under contribution. The treasury of the King of Prussia was nearly exhausted, and in all appearance he would not long have a single village left. They were going to put him under the ban of the empire; his process was begun; he was declared a rebel, and had he been taken, in all probability would have been condemned to lose his head.

In this extremity he took a fancy to kill himself. He writ to his sister, the Margraves of Bareith, that he was going to terminate his life; but he could not conclude the play without rhyming. His passion for poetry was still stronger than his hatred of life; he therefore writ to the Marquis d'Argens a long epistle in verse, wherein he informed him of his resolution, and bid him adieu.

However singular this epistle may be, from the subject, the person by whom it was written, and the person to whom it was addressed, it cannot be transcribed entirely, because of the many repetitions; but there are passages, which

which I will infert, tolerably well turned
for a Northern King.

Yes, D'Argens, yes; the die, my friend, is cast;
Sick of the present, weary of the past,
To bear Misfortune's yoke no longer prone,
Henceforth or pains or pleasures I disown;
Nor thus in mis'ry will I deign to live,
The lengthen'd day, which Nature meant to give;
With heart well fortify'd, with eye as firm,
Undaunted I approach the happy term,
When night eternal shall my foes confound,
And fate no more shall have the power to wound.
Grandeurs adieu!—adieu chimeras all!
No more your flashes dazzle or appal;
Though on my morn of life you falsely smil'd,
And, prone to vain desires, my soul beguil'd,
Long since have vanish'd all desires so vain,
And Truth and stern Philosophy remain.

How

How frivolous you were by Zeno taught,
Your errors are no longer worth a thought.
Adieu, ye gentle pleasures and delights,
Seductive nymphs, whose flowery yoke unites,
The sweets of smiling Gaiety and Ease,
And all the idle arts by which you please.
But oh! shall I, Misfortune's bondman, speak
Of pleasures and delights, where sorrows shriek!
Can plaintive nightingale, or turtle-dove,
When vultures tear them, sing or coo of love?
Long has the star of day but lighted me
To new born ills, increase of misery;
His poppies Morpheus has disdain'd to shed,
Near the dank turf where I have lain my head;
Each morn I cry, and still the tear o'erflows,
Behold another day, and other woes.
When night appears, night cannot give relief,
Each moment adds eternity to grief.
Heroes of Liberty, whom I revere,
Brutus and Cato, ye of soul sincere,

Your

Your deaths, illustrious, dissipate my gloom,
 Your funeral flambeaux light me to my tomb;
 Your antique virtue Fear and Death controls,
 And points a road unknown to vulgar souls.
 Vanish, ye pompous Phantoms of romance,
 Ingend'ring superstitious ignorance;
 Religious aid I seek not when I'd know
 Or what we are, or whence we come or go;
 Epicurus has taught how I'm annoy'd,
 My body by injurious time destroyed;
 And for the quick'ning fire, the spark, the breath,
 Mortal like me, it perishes in death:
 Part of a being organiz'd 'tis born,
 Grows with the Child, and doth the man adorn;
 Suffers when I'm in pain, pleas'd when I am pleas'd,
 Is old when I am, ill when I'm diseas'd;
 And when eternal night shall life invest,
 Will sink, like me, to everlasting rest.
 A vanquish'd fugitive, by friends betray'd,
 I suffer torments more than e'er were laid

(As

(As most fictitious lying fables tell)
On poor Prometheus in the depths of Hell ;
Therefore, as wretches who in dungeons deep,
Weary of thus existing but to weep,
Deceive their butchers, snap their strongest chains,
And end at once their being and their pains ;
So, with one noble effort, will I rend
The web of life, and all my mis'ries end.
This dreary picture will inform thee why
I thus, my friend, have been induc'd to die ;
Nor hence conclude I vainly seek to claim,
From the dark senseless grave, the bubble Fame :
But yet remember me when fruitful earth
Gives odoriferous shrubs and myrtles birth ;
Each spring, when flowers adorn the youthful year,
Drop o'er my tomb a rose-bud and a tear.

He sent me this epistle written with his
own hand. Several lines are pillaged from
the

the Abbé de Chaulieu and me. The ideas are often incoherent, and the verses in general unmusical; but there are some good; and it was a great thing for a King to write two hundred bad verses in the state he then was. He was desirous it should be said he preserved all his presence of mind and liberty of thinking, at a moment when they are usually lost to others.

The letter he writ me testified the same sentiments, but there were less of *eternal Night, Myrtles and Roses, Flambeaux, Chimeras, and shrieking Sorrows*. I combated in prose the resolution he had taken to die, and had not much trouble
in

in persuading him to live. I advised him to imitate the Duke of Cumberland, and set a negociation on foot with Marshal Richelieu; in short, I took all the liberties one could take with a despairing Poet, and who was not likely much longer to be a King. He writ to Marshal Richelieu, but not receiving any answer he determined to beat us, and sent me word he was going to attack Marshal de Soubise. His letter finished with verses, worthy of his situation, his dignity, his courage, and his wit.

When shipwreck stares us in the face,
Daring let us death embrace,
And live and die a King.

As

As he marched towards the French and Imperialists, he writ to the Margraves his sister, that he should kill himself, but he was happier than he said or hoped. He waited on the fifth of November, 1757, for the French and Imperial army, in a tolerably advantageous post, at Rosbach, on the frontiers of Saxony; and as he had been continually talking of killing himself, he was willing his brother Prince Henry, should perform this promise for him, at the head of five Prussian battalions, which were to sustain the first shock of the enemy, while his artillery thundered upon them, and his cavalry attacked theirs.

R

Prince

Prince Henry was, in fact, slightly wounded in the neck by a musket-ball, and I believe was the only Prussian hurt on that day. The French and Austrians fled at the first discharge, and the rout was the most unheard of and complete that History can afford. The battle of Rosbach shall long be celebrated. Thirty thousand French, and twenty thousand Imperialists, were seen flying, shamefully and precipitately, before five battalions and some squadrons. The defeats of Agincourt, Cressy, and Poitiers, were not more humiliating. The discipline and military evolutions, which the father had began and the son made perfect, were the true cause of this strange victory.

tory. The Prussian exercise had been fifty years in bringing to perfection. They wished to imitate them in France as well as in other countries; but they could not effect that with the French, naturally averse to discipline, in four years, which the Prussians had been fifty about. They had even changed their manœuvres in France at each review, so that the officers and soldiers, not half perfect in each new one, and the evolutions being all different from one another, had in reality learnt nothing, but was actually without any kind of discipline. All was in disorder at the very sight of the Prussians; and Fortune, in one quarter of an hour, snatched Frederic from the
depth

depth of despair to seat him on the heights of happiness and glory.

He was, however, very fearful, that this good fortune was merely temporary; he dreaded to support the whole weight of the French, Russian, and Austrian powers, and was desirous of detaching Louis XV. from Maria-Teresa.

The fatal affair at Rossbach, occasioned all France to murmur at the treaty of the Abbé de Bernis with the court of Vienna. The Cardinal de Tencin, Archbishop of Lyons, had always maintained his rank of Minister of State, and a private correspondence with the King of France,

France, and he was, more than any one, averse to the Austrian alliance. He had given me a reception at Lyons, which he had a right to believe was not very satisfactory; the itch of intriguing, however, which followed him in his retreat, and which, it is said, never leaves men in place, made him desirous of leaguings with me to engage the Margraves of Bareith to treat with him, and put the interests of her brother in his hands. He would reconcile the King of Prussia to the King of France, and hoped to procure a peace. It was not difficult to persuade Madame de Bareith, and the King her brother, to this negociation; and I undertook it with the greater ala-

crity, because I foresaw it could not succeed. The Margraves wrote to Frederic, and the letters between her and the Cardinal passed through my hands. I had the secret satisfaction of being the intermediary in that grand affair ; and perhaps a still farther pleasure, that of foreseeing the Cardinal was preparing for himself a subject of great disappointment. He writ to the King of France, and inclosed the letter of the Margraves ; but how utter was his astonishment at receiving a laconic answer from the King, informing him, the Secretary for Foreign Affairs would inform him of his royal intentions. The Abbé de Bernis dictated the answer which the Cardinal
was

was obliged to send to Frederic ; which answer was an entire refusal to negotiate. He was forced to sign a copy of this letter, by which every thing was ended, and died of chagrin in about a fortnight afterwards.

I never could thoroughly understand this kind of death, or how Ministers of State, and old Cardinals with hardened souls, should have a sufficient degree of sensibility, to die through some trifling disgust. My design was only to laugh at him ; to mortify, and not to kill.

There was a kind of greatness in the Ministry refusing thus to treat of peace
with

with the King of Prussia, after having been beaten by him, and humbled ; there was also great fidelity and good-nature in sacrificing themselves for the House of Austria ; but these virtues were long ill recompensed by Fortune. The Hanoverians, Hessians, and Brunswickians, were less observant of public faith, but more successful. They had stipulated with the Marshal de Richelieu not to bear arms against us, nor to repass the Elbe, beyond which they had been sent back ; they, however broke their bargain of the *Caudian Forks* as soon as they knew we had been beaten at Rosbach. Desertion, the want of discipline, and disease, destroyed our armies ; and the result of all

all our operations, in the spring of 1758, was, that we had lost twelve millions and a half sterling, and fifty thousand men in Germany, in support of Maria-Teresa, as we had done in 1741 with fighting against her.

The King of Prussia, who had beaten our army at Rosbach, in Thuringua, went next to fight the Austrian army at sixty leagues distance. The French then might still have entered Saxony; the victors were gone, there was nothing to oppose them; but they had thrown away their arms, lost their cannon, ammunition, provisions, and especially their understanding. They were dispersed
and

and their remains were with difficulty collected. A month afterwards, and on the same day, Frederic gained a still more signal and better fought victory over the Austrians near Breslau. He retook Breslau with fifteen thousand prisoners, and the rest of Silesia was soon subdued. Gustavus Adolphus never performed such acts; we must therefore pardon him his poetry, his pleasantries, his little malice, and even his feminine sins. The defects of the man vanish before the glory of the hero.

I left writing memoirs of myself on the sixth of November, 1759, thinking
them

them as uselefs as Bayle's letters to his mother ; the life of St. Evremont, written by Desmaiseaux, or of the Abbé Mongon, written by himself. But many things, either new or laughable, have again induced me to the ridicule of speaking of myself*. I behold from my windows the city where John Chauvin, the Picard, called Calvin, reigned ; and the place where he burnt Servet for the good of his soul. Almost all the Priests of this country think at present like Servet : nay they even go farther. They do not believe that Jesus Christ

* From this passage, and others, it is evident these memoirs were addressed to some individual, a Lady, by Voltaire.

was God; and these Messieurs, who formerly gave no quarter to purgatory, are now so far humanised, as to find favour for souls in hell. They pretend their torments shall not be eternal; that Theseus shall not always sit upon his stony chair, nor Syphilus continue everlastingly to roll his rock. Thus they have turned their hell, in which they no longer believe, into purgatory, in which also they do not believe. This is rather a pleasant revolution in the History of the human mind, and might furnish disputes enough for the cutting of throats, making of bonfires, and acting St. Bartholomew's day once more. And yet they do not even call names, and reproach

proach one another, so much are manners changed. I must indeed except myself, whom one of their Preachers attacked for having dared to assert that Calvin, the Picard, was of a cruel nature, and had burnt Servet without cause. Only observe the contradictions of this world; here are people almost avowedly sectaries of Servet, who, yet, abuse me because I found Calvin wrong for burning him at a slow fire of green faggots.

They *would* prove to me in form, that Calvin was a good christian, and petitioned the council of Geneva to communicate the papers used on the trial of

S

Servet;

Servet; but the Council was more prudent; the papers were refused, and they forbidden to write against me in Geneva. I look upon this little triumph, as one of the strongest proofs of the progress of reason in our age.

Philosophy enjoyed a still more signal victory over its enemies at Laufanne. Some Gospel Ministers of that country thought proper to compile, I know not what bad book against me, for the honour, as they called it, of christianity; and I, with little difficulty, was empowered to seize and suppress the impression by authority of the Magistrates. This was perhaps the first time Theologians have
been

been obliged to be silent, and respect a Philosopher. Judge then if I ought not passionately to love this country. Yes, thinking beings, I assert it is exceedingly agreeable to live in a republic where you may say to its chiefs,—Come to-morrow and dine with me.

I did not, however, yet think myself perfectly free; and as I held this a subject worthy attention, that I might become so, I purchased some adjoining lands in France. There were two estates, about a league from Geneva, which had formerly enjoyed all the privileges of that city; and I had the good fortune to obtain a Brevet from the King, by which
those

those privileges were continued to me. At last I so managed my destiny, that I was independent in Switzerland, in the territories of Geneva, and in France. I have heard much of liberty, but do not believe there is an individual in Europe who had wrought his own freedom like me. Let those who will, follow my example; or rather, those who can.

I certainly could not have chosen a better time than this, to enjoy repose far from Paris. They were then as mad and inveterate about their private disputes as in the days of the Fronde, except having actually a civil war. But as they had neither a Monarch of the
market-

market-place like the Duke de Beaufort, nor a Coadjutor, granting benedictions with a dagger, they proceeded only to wordy wars. They began by forging bank bills for the other world, invented as I have already said by Beaumont, Archbishop of Paris, an obstinate man, who did evil with all his heart, and from an excess of zeal. He was a serious fool, something in the style of St. Thomas à Becket. The quarrel grew more violent concerning an office in the hospital, the appointment to which the Parliament pretended was in them; and the Archbishop holding it to be a sacred place, said it depended totally on the church. Paris was all divided into par-

ties, and the trifling factions of Jansenists and Molinists did not spare each other. The King thought proper to treat them as they sometimes serve fools who fight in the street, over whom they throw buckets of water to part them : he very rightly said they were both wrong ; but they remained not the less envenomed. He exiled the Archbishop and the Parliament ; but a master should not turn off his servants, till he is certain of finding others to supply their places. The Court was obliged to recall the Parliament, because a Chamber, called royal, composed of Counsellors of State, and Masters of Requests, and erected to determine Law-suits, had lost its practice.

The

The Parisians had taken a fancy not to plead before any court of justice, except that called the Parliament. All the members therefore were recalled, and imagined they had gained a signal victory over the King. They paternally advised him in their remonstrances no more to banish his Parliament, because, said they, *that is giving a very bad example.* They proceeded to such lengths at last, that the King resolved to abolish one of their Chambers, and diminish the others; and soon after these Messieurs, all had their dismissal, except those of the great Chamber. Loud murmurs now went abroad; they publicly declaimed against the King, and the fire which came out of their mouth unhappily caught the
brain

brain of a Lackey, named Damiens, who often frequented the great Hall. It is proved by the process, this fanatic of the long robe never intended to kill the King, but only to inflict a gentle correction. There is nothing so absurd which may not enter the head of man. This poor wretch had been usher to the Jesuit's College, where I have sometimes seen the scholars give slight stabs with their penknives, and the ushers return them. Damiens, therefore went to Versailles with this resolution, and there in the midst of his courtiers and guards wounded the King with a small penknife.

They did not fail during the first horror of the accident, to impute the blow to the

the

the arm of the Jesuits, to whom, said they, it belonged according to ancient usage. I have read a letter from one father Griffet, in which he says, *This time it was not us ; it is at present the turn of Messieurs.* It was of course the office of the Grand Prevot of the Court to judge the assassin, because the crime had been committed within the precincts of the palace. The culprit began by accusing seven members of the court *des Enquêtes*, and they wished nothing better than to leave this accusation upon record, and execute the criminal. Thus the King rendered the Parliament odious, and obtained an advantage which will endure as long as the Monarchy.

M E M O I R S

O F

V O L T A I R E.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

PART THE FOURTH AND LAST.

IT was thought that M. d'Argenson advised the King to grant the parliament permission to judge the foregoing affair, and he was well rewarded; for eight days after he lost his place, and was exiled. The King had the weakness to grant large pensions to the Counsellors
who

who conducted the trial of Damiens, as if they had rendered him some signal and difficult service, which conduct inspired them with new confidence. They again imagined themselves important personages, and their chimeras of representing the nation, and being tutors to Kings, were once more awakened.

This scene over, and having nothing else to do, they amused themselves with persecuting the philosophers. Omer Joli de Fleury, Advocate-General of the parliament of Paris, displayed a triumph the most complete, that ignorance, deceit, and hypocrisy, ever obtained. Several men of letters most

estimable

estimable from their learning and deportment, formed an association to compose an immense dictionary of whatever could enlighten the human mind, and it became an object of commerce with the booksellers. The Chancellor, the Ministry, all encouraged an enterprize so noble; seven volumes had already appeared; and were translated into English, Italian, German, and Dutch. This treasure opened by the French to all nations, might be considered as what did us at that time the most honour; so much were the excellent articles in the Encyclopedia superior to the bad, which were also tolerably numerous. They had little to complain of in the work, except
too

too many puerile declamations unfortunately adopted by the authors of the collection, who seized whatever came to hand to swell the book ; but all which those authors writ themselves was good.

Omer Joli de Fleury, however, on the twenty-third of February, 1759, accused these poor philosophers of being Atheists, Deists, corrupters of youth, rebels to the King, &c. &c. &c. and to prove his accusation, cited St. Paul, and the trials of Theophilus and Abraham Chaumaix*.

* Abraham Chaumaix, formerly *** since Jansenist and Convulsionary, was then the oracle of the parliament of Paris. Omer Joli de Fleury cited him as a Father of the Church ; he has since been a school-master at Moscow.

T

He

He wanted nothing but to have read the book against which he exclaimed ; for if he had read it, he was a strange imbecile being. He demanded justice of the Court against the article *soul*, which, according to him, was pure materialism.

Pray remark that the article *soul*, one of the worst in the work, was written by a poor Doctor of the Sorbonne, who killed himself with declaiming, right or wrong, against materialism.

The whole discourse of this Omer Joli de Fleury was a string of similar blunders. He informed against a book he had either not read, or not understood ;

flood; and the entire parliament, at the requisition of Omer, condemned the work not only without examining, but even without reading a single page. This manner of doing justice, is very much beneath the custom of Bridoye, for there they may chance to be right.

The editors had procured the King's privilege, and the parliament certainly had no right to revoke a privilege granted by his Majesty. It appertains to them neither to Judge of an *Arrêt du Conseil*, nor of any thing confirmed in Chancery: they however assumed the power to condemn what the Chancellor had approved, and appointed Lawyers to

to decide upon the subjects of geometry and metaphysics contained in the Encyclopedia. A chancellor of the least fortitude would have annulled the Arret of parliament as incompetent: the Chancellor L'Amoignon satisfied himself with revoking the privilegē, that he might not undergo the shame of seeing what he had stamped with the seal of supreme authority judged and condemned.

One would imagine this adventure had happened in the days of Father Garasse, and that these were arrets against taking emetics; but on the contrary, it was in the most enlightened age France had ever seen. So true is it
that

that one fool is enough to dishonour a nation.

No one will scruple to confess, that under such circumstances, Paris was no resting-place for a Philosopher, and that Aristotle was very prudent in retiring to Chalcis when Fanaticism reigned at Athens. Besides, the condition of a man of letters at Paris, is but one step above a Mountebank.

The place of Gentleman in ordinary to his Majesty, which the King had given me, was no great thing. Men are very silly; for my part, I think it much better to build a fine house, as I

T 3

did,

did, have a theatre, and keep a good table, than to be hunted at Paris like Helvetius, by people holding the court of parliament, or by other people holding the stables of the Sorbonne. As I was certain I could neither make men more reasonable, the parliament less pedantic, nor the Theologians less ridiculous, I continued to be happy far from their follies.

And yet while I contemplate the storm, I am almost ashamed of my own tranquillity. I behold Germany dyed in blood; France utterly ruined; our fleets and armies beaten; our Ministers dismissed, one after another, without any prospect

prospect of better success; and the King of Portugal assassinated, not by a Lackey, but the Nobility of the kingdom. Neither can the Jesuits this time say *it was not us*: they have carefully preserved their rights; it has been sufficiently proved these good Fathers had given the sanctified knife to the Parricides. They give for reason their sovereignty of Paraguay, and said they have treated with the King of Portugal as from crown to crown.

I shall now relate a trifling, but as singular an adventure as ever happened since Kings and Poets first were seen on earth. Frederic having passed some
time

time guarding the Frontiers of Silesia in an impenetrable camp, began to be tired of inactivity; and therefore to pass time away, composed an Ode, and signed it Frederic; this he put at the head of an enormous bundle of verse and prose, which he sent to me. I opened the package, and found I had not been the first who had performed that operation; it was evident the seals had been broken, and I was terrified at reading the following verses:

Oh trifling nation, light and vain!
 Are these the warriors whom Turenne
 And Luxembourg with laurels bound,
 With Fame's immortal honours crown'd;

Who,

Who, as we're told in ancient story,
 Danger and death despis'd for glory ?
 Lo the vile rout ! behold each slave
 Fearful in fight, in pillage brave !

Behold their feeble monarch move,
 The tool of Pompadour and Love !
 To Love opprobrious, as to Fame,
 Unworthy he the Monarch's name :
 At random see he flings the reins,
 Detesting Empire's anxious pains ;
 His land and people in distress,
 He revels on in lewd excess ;
 Himself a slave, when pride inflates,
 Would dictate laws to Kings and States.

I trembled as I read the poem, some
 lines of which are excellent, or may pass
 for such. I had unfortunately acquired,
 and deserved, the reputation of having
 been

been the continual corrector of the King of Prussia's poetry. The packet had been opened, the verses read, might perhaps be published, the King of France would attribute them to me, and I should become not only guilty of high treason against the King, but, which is still worse, against Madame de Pompadour.

In this perplexity I desired the French Resident at Geneva to come to my house, and shewed him the packet. He agreed it had been opened before it arrived, and thought there was no other way of acting in a case where the safety of my head was concerned, but sending it as it was to the Duke de Choiseul, Minister of State.

State. In any situation but this I should not have followed his advice; but it was necessary to prevent my own ruin, and I acquainted the court with the true character of its enemy. I knew the Duke de Choiseul would not betray me, but content himself with persuading his Majesty that Frederic was an enemy, whom, if they could, they ought to crush.

The Duke did not stop here; he was a man of wit, wrote verses, and had friends who wrote also: He paid the King of Prussia in his own coin, and sent me a satire against Frederic, as biting and unmerciful as his own. The following

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ing lines, are extracts from this Poem * :

No longer he the man, by whom
The arts from black oblivion's tomb
Were call'd and o'er Germania spread :
A husband, brother, son of guilt,
His Sire in justice, would have spilt
The blood which so much blood has shed.

Yet he audacious, durst aspire
To touch Apollo's sacred lyre ;
The rhyming King of Poet-tasters :
His Mars and Phœbus are the same,
Alike in war and verse his fame,
Zoilus and Mævius are his masters.

* I have been assured by M. the P. F. of S. this Ode was written by S. Palinot de Montenoy.

Behold,

Behold, in spite of all his guards,

Where Nero meets the due rewards

Of all his hideous provocations ;

The Tyrant see of Syracuse

Now prostitute a barren muse.

Despis'd while he insults the nations.

And wherefore, Savage Cenfor, say,

Would'st thou impede their harmless play,

When Love, with Nature, smiling comes?

Shalt thou pretend to judge their rites,

Who ne'er could'st taste but those delights

Imparted by thy noisy drums?

The Duke de Choiseul assured me
when he sent this answer, that he would
print the satire if the King of Prussia pub-
lished his ; and added, they would beat
him as heartily with the pen, as they

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hoped to do with the sword. Had I been inclined so to amuse myself, it depended only on me to set the King of France and the King of Prussia to war in rhyme, which would have been a farce of novelty upon earth. But I enjoyed another pleasure; that of being more prudent than Frederic. I writ him word his ode was beautiful, but that he ought not to publish it; he had glory enough without that, and should not shut every door of reconciliation with the King of France, aggravate him beyond bearing, and force him to some desperate effort to obtain a just revenge. I added, my niece had burnt his ode, in mortal fear of its being imputed to me. He believed me,

me, and returned me thanks; but not without a few reproaches, for having burnt the best verses he had ever written. The Duke de Choiseul kept his word and was discreet.

To make the pleasantry compleat, I thought it possible to lay the foundation of the peace of Europe on these poetical pieces, which might have continued the war to the destruction of Frederic. My correspondence with the Duke de Choiseul gave birth to that idea; and it appeared so ridiculous, so worthy the transactions of the times, that I indulged it, and had myself the satisfaction of proving on what weak and invisible pivots the destinies

destinies of nations turn. The Duke writ me several ostensible letters, conceived in such terms, as the King of Prussia might venture to make overtures of peace without danger of Austria taking umbrage at France; and Frederic returned answers in a similar way, with little risk of displeasing the English court. This ticklish treaty is still in agitation, and resembles the sports of cats, which give a pat with one paw and a scratch with the other. The King of Prussia, driven out of Dresden, and beaten by the Russians, is in want of peace; and France, beaten at sea by the English, and on shore by the Hanoverians, with an ill-timed loss of men and money,

money, is obliged to finish this ruinous war.

And this, beautiful Emily, is the point at which, for the present, we stop.

December 27, 1759.

I continue to write, and on singular events. The King of Prussia ended a letter to me on the 17th of November thus: *I shall write more fully from Dresden, where I shall be in three days; and the third day he was beaten by Marshal ****, with the loss of ten thousand men.* It seems to me, every thing I behold is the fable of the girl and her milk. Our great sea-politician, Berrier,

formerly Lieutenant de Police at Paris, and who, from that post, became Secretary of State and Minister of the Marine, without ever having seen a vessel larger than the ferry-boat at St. Cloude, or the barge of Auxerre; this Berrier, I say, took a fancy to fit out a fine fleet, and make a descent on England; but scarcely had the fleet peeped out of Brest, before it was beaten by the English, broken upon the rocks, destroyed by the winds, or swallowed up by the seas.

We have seen one Silhoutte, made Comptroller-General of the Finances, of whom no man knew any thing except that he had translated some of Pope's
poetry

poetry into prose. He was said to be an eagle, but in less than a month the eagle was metamorphosed to an owl. He found the secret of annihilating public credit to that degree, that the State all at once wanted money to pay the troops. The King was obliged to send his plate to the Mint, and a great part of the kingdom followed his example.

January 1st, 1760.

Frederic must be perfidious; he has sent my confidential letters to London, and has endeavoured to sow dissension betwixt us and our allies. All kind of perfidies, permitted to a Grand King of Prussia, has he acted; even to the making
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of verses, for those he must ever make. I sent them to Versailles, doubting they would be accepted. He will cede nothing; and proposes, in order to indemnify the Elector of Saxony, that they shall give him Erford, which belongs to the Elector of Mentz. He always must rob somebody; it is his way. We shall see the result of all this, and of the campaign they are going to make.

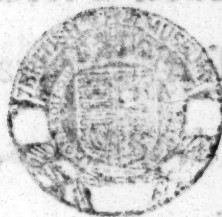
As this great and horrid tragedy has ever had a mixture of the comic, so they have lately printed at Paris, *Des Poesies ouf da King mine Master*, as Freitag says; in which there is an epistle to Marshal Keith, where he ridicules christianity,
and

and mocks at the immortality of the soul. The devotees are displeased; the Calvinist clergy murmur. These pedants looked upon him as a support to the good cause. When he threw the Magistrates of Leipzig into dungeons, and sold their beds to get their money, he had the admiration of such Priests; but when he amuses himself by translating passages from Seneca, Lucretius, and Cicero, they look upon him as a monster.

Priests would canonize Cartouche or Jonathan Wild, were they devotees.

T H E E N D.

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Prig would canonize Carver, or
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